

India Now

December, 1982

Monthly News Publication of Indian People's
Association in North America (IPANA)

This PDF is prepared by Sukhwant Hundal in memory of his father
Shivdev S. Hundal and mother Harbans Kaur Hundal.

Source: Sukhwant Hundal's personal collections

INDIA NOW

Vol. 5 No. 12 December 1982 Monthly News Publication of Indian People's Association in North America

Sikh Agitation Intensifies

Akali Dal Demonstrates at Asiad

KISHAN BAJWA

The government has reportedly arrested over 1,200 Sikhs including many Akali Dal leaders at the district and village level and activists in many parts of Punjab and in New Delhi. Many arrests were made on the eve of the Ninth Asian Games in New Delhi and just after the games started amid many controversies (see separate story on the Asiad). Many people were picked up from trains and buses on suspicion that they were heading to New Delhi to participate in the morchas outside the Asiad sites as earlier announced by Akali Dal leaders in Amritsar. The police and paramilitary forces in Punjab and Haryana have been searching every bus, truck or train looking for potential demonstrators and stopping them from proceeding to New Delhi. Meanwhile, Akali Dal leaders said that thousands of their supporters were already assembled in the capital to stage peaceful demonstrations and court arrests daily during the two-week games to focus world attention to their demand and expose Indira Gandhi's government's atrocities on Sikhs to the world.

Earlier, Akali Dal leader Harchand Singh Longowal announced on Oct. 20 that his government would start a fast starting Nov. 4, the birth anniversary of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev. In an interview with Reuters, Longowal said there would be fresh

trouble if the government did not meet party's demands. He also said that their demand for greater autonomy for the states would not lead to a division of the Indian nation: "India would be more unified by making it a federation. If you strengthen the center at the expense of the states, it will cause rebellion."

PUNJAB TENSE

The situation in Amritsar and other parts of Punjab is in the meantime getting worse. Many incidents of violence were reported. In late October, in Amritsar, a senior police officer shot dead a Sikh protester who allegedly tried to attack the officer with an axe. Subsequently, a bomb explosion at a Hindu religious procession on October 26 killed at least 2 persons and injured over 90 people. Armed soldiers and paramilitary forces marched through the city after the police was reportedly not able to quell demonstrators protesting the hand-grenade attack. There was a bomb explosion in Jullundur on October 29 which injured many people. Longowal said the government's hand was behind the blast. "The state government is hatching conspiracies to create tension and disturb peace in the state ... another development, 3 men on a motorcycle shot and killed a district leader of Nirankari Sikhs in a village 45 miles east of Amritsar and escaped."

Govt Adopts Conciliatory Attitude

Four days before the Akalis were to launch the new agitation, Home Minister P.C. Sethi announced on Oct. 31 that the central government was willing to concede some of the major demands. Sethi told the Press Trust of India that the center was willing to transfer Chandigarh to Punjab and declare Amritsar a holy city. Earlier, Indira Gandhi had sent Swarn Singh to meet with Akali leaders and discuss their grievances. Swarn Singh met with Longowal as well as Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who has emerged as the most powerful leader of the Akalis even though he is not even a member of the Akali Dal.

SIKH GROUPS HERE PROTEST

Meanwhile Sikh organizations in the US and Canada have protested against what they say are violations of human rights of Sikhs in India. The federation of Sikh societies of Canada sent a memorandum last week to UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar outlining their complaints against the Indian government. In California, a meeting of the overseas units of the Akali Dal decided to also demonstrate outside Indian consulates protesting the government's "persecution" of Sikhs.

INSIDE

Shourie Forced to Leave Express 2

Asiad Held Amid Controversies 3

Punjab Crisis: Background 4

Women's Cooperative at Montreal 9

Ali Akbar Khan Disappoints 12

First Harijan Chief Justice

Justice K. Bhimiah was first Harijan to become the chief justice of a high court in the country.

Over 1,500 Feared Dead, Millions Affected Cyclones Hit Gujarat and Andhra

A severe cyclone hit the coastal areas of Gujarat on Nov. 8. At least 520 people have been killed, but government sources fear more than 1,500 people could have died as reports from some of the beleaguered districts said the extent of destruction was considerable. Wind with speeds up to 125 mph ripped apart houses and huts, uprooted trees and electricity poles. About 1,500 fishermen in 300 boats were reported missing or stranded on high seas. At least 5 million people living in 4,000 villages are affected. More than 100,000 houses and huts had been destroyed or damaged. The total damage could run into millions of dollars; over 30,000 cattle had perished. The loss in potential farm production is estimated to be about \$105 million.

Less than a month ago, another cyclone had hit the coastal districts of Andhra on Oct. 19 in which at least 40 people were killed. Over 50,000 houses were damaged in 300 villages in Nellore, Parakasam, Visakhapatnam, Guntur, Kurnool and Nalgonda areas. The Andhra government had estimated the loss to be \$660 million.

The worst affected areas in Gujarat were Amreli, Bhavnagar, Junagadh and Kaira districts, but deaths were also reported from Baroda, Syrendranagar, Surat, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Sabarkantha, Broach, Rajkot and Panchmahal districts. Indira Gandhi called the cyclone a "national tragedy."

GUJARAT WAS FACING DROUGHT

Ironically, Gujarat is one of the 11 states facing drought because of a lack of rains. At least 8,000 villages were affected because of inadequate monsoons. The crops already hit by drought were badly affected by the cyclone especially in peanut and cotton growing areas.

ORISSA CYCLONE

Over 5 months ago in June, a cyclone had hit the coastal region of Orissa in which more than 200 people were killed and tens of thousands lost their homes. An advance warning for the cyclone was reportedly issued to the state administration by the weather bureaus but no precautions were taken in time to minimize the loss and suffering.

'Time to Rise' and 'Prisoners of Conscience' Win Tyne Awards

Uthman Da Vela (A Time to Rise) and Prisoners of Conscience, two political documentaries made by Anand Patwardhan were chosen from over 80 films for the Tyne Award at the recent Tyneside Film festival in Britain. Twenty-three other films were judged to be of special merit.

The festival, which promotes independent cinema, gives prizes of around

\$10,000 each to people whose works are judged to have provided a "substantial example of the potential of independent film making."

The award was established this year. The jury, consisting of Trevor Griffiths, Sylvia Harvey, Stewart McKinnon and Sheila Whitaker, said Patwardhan's documentaries were "international in scope,"

(continued on p.12)

Khalistanis Fire at Toronto Protest



Toronto, Nov. 14. Sukhraj Singh, a community activist, was shot and wounded in the chest by two supporters of the Khalistan movement during a peaceful demonstration organized in front of the Indian Consulate to protest the persecution of Sikhs by the Indian govt. Two other demonstrators and an Indian police officer were also shot. See IPANA Editorial, page 4.

Ethnic Lists Maintained by Quebec Govt

Our Montreal Correspondent

"Kanungo, R.: Indian origin. Vice-president of the Indo-Canada Association of Montreal (1978)."

"Khetrapal, G.: Indian origin. President of the Indo-Canada Association of Montreal (1979). Favors rapprochement with Quebec government."

The above information is contained in a "confidential" list of over 750 ethnic community leaders representing nearly 250 organizations in Quebec. The list was prepared by the Parti Quebecois, which has now ruled Quebec for nearly 7 years, and distributed to its workers during the last Assembly elections four years ago.

(continued on p.5)

Arun Shourie, who was recently awarded the 1982 Ramon Magsaysay award for journalism, literature and creative communication arts, has been fired from the post of executive editor of the Indian Express by its owner Ram Nath Goenka. Goenka wrote Shourie recently urging that they "part company" in the interests of the paper. Goenka told PTI on Nov. 6 that Shourie "readily responded" to the request.

Shourie, who was also named the international editor of the year by the World Press review of the US earlier this year, was recognized in his citation of the Magsaysay award as a "concerned citizen employing his pen as an effective adversary to corruption, inequality and injustice." From the newspaper accounts, it is evident that the above qualities and his courage which made him popular in urban India, were precisely what offended and annoyed the Express owners and the government. Interestingly enough, in the past 4 years, 12 editor-level personnel at the Express group, including Kuldip Nayar, S. Nihal Singh, Ajit Bhattacharjee, Bikram Vohar, Darryl D'Monte and S. Mulgaokar, have left one by one.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

Shourie, who had been with the Express since January 1979, is credited for encouraging investigative journalism among young journalists, some examples being the exposure of police brutalities in Bhagalpur blindings of prisoners and Chhatpur in Madhya Pradesh. He was instrumental in getting an award established for young journalists in an effort to promote among them comprehensive investigations of social injustices and human rights violation.

SHOURIE UNDER FIRE AFTER EXPOSURE OF ANTULAY AFFAIR

Shourie came under attack by the Goenkas immediately after he exposed the Antulay scandal concerned with floating of many trusts to collect crores of rupees in exchange for favors. Shourie had also linked Antulay's trusts with Indira Gandhi. There was a report in India Today last year of meetings between members and friends of PM's family and Goenka's daughter-in-law, Saroj, who has been taking an active interest in managing the newspaper. One outcome was reportedly the deal that in exchange for Shourie's removal from the Express, the government would not push its case against Goenka. Some of Shourie's articles and reports subsequently had been held up under explicit orders from the then editor-in-chief S. Nihal Singh and the present chief B.G. Verghese.

Shourie Forced to Leave Express Goenka Deal with Indira Gandhi Rumored

KISHAN BAJWA

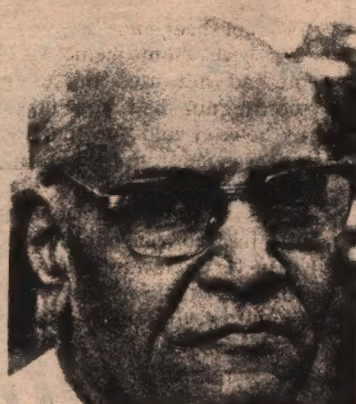


Arun Shourie

Shourie had to get some of his articles printed in other magazines including Calcutta-based weekly Sunday.

According to Express insiders, the first hint this year that Shourie was being made a sacrificial lamb surfaced in late June. Shourie had submitted an article exposing the Kuo Oil deal and once again linking the prime minister's house with the deal. Editor-in-chief Verghese for some mysterious reason persistently stalled publication on one excuse or the other. Finally, Shourie wrote a letter to Verghese expressing his misgivings about the nonpublication of the article; the letter also detailed the manner in which Goenka operated and put pressure on Shourie. The letter was recently published by the Delhi-based Surya magazine along with other private correspondence between Shourie and Verghese which has brought the confrontation between Shourie and Verghese and Goenkas to the public.

Shourie had 50 copies of his unpublished article on the Kuo Oil deal cyclostyled on July 8 and distributed to MPs on the opening day of Parliament's monsoon session. The same day Verghese released the article for publication. Among other things, Shourie had reported in the article that it was Birla who under pressure from Kamal Nath, a Congress(I) MP



Ramnath Goenka

and close associate of the late Sanjay Gandhi, implanted a story arguing that the deal for fixed prices of oil would be most beneficial for the country. This story was used by the ministry to justify an oil deal with a shady Hong Kong-based firm whose assets were worth 50 dollars.

GOENKA'S DEAL WITH GOVT?

When Kamal Nath happened to meet Shourie, he flatly stated that Goenka had struck a deal with the PM to have Shourie removed. He also stated that Verghese's appointment as editor-in-chief had been "cleared by us" and also quoted from the letter Goenka had written to Verghese about Shourie's removal. He challenged Shourie to have any anti-government article printed in the Express under his by-line. Indeed, Shourie's article on the Bihar press bill was refused publication. According to a senior editor of another paper, the Magsaysay award made Shourie's job at the Express safe for just another month.

In an interview published in a hardly known Bombay magazine Celebrity, Goenka recently lashed out at Shourie in a series of what India Today called wild and improbable charges. He accused Shourie of being a plagiarist who used material obtained by others under his own name. Most ludicrous of these being that

Goenka himself put together from his own sources the Antulay story for which Shourie had undeservedly gotten the credit. He also accused Shourie of a "total lack of balance." But after publication of the interview, Goenka turned around and in a rejoinder to Celebrity, objected to his statements being distorted and inaccurate. He also insisted that some of his comments were off the record. The magazine's publisher and Goenka's interviewer Shobha Kilachand have stood by the interview as being authentic. Kilachand claimed Goenka said much more than was actually published but "we didn't use it since I felt it was in extremely bad taste." She was also convinced that Goenka knew that the interview was to appear in print.

Shourie also wrote a rejoinder to Celebrity in which he gave precise dates and timings of his meetings with each of his sources for the Antulay expose and also exactly what material he received from each.

IMPACT OF SHOURIE'S OUSTER AND HIS FUTURE

India Today quoted a senior Express correspondent in Delhi when there were speculations of his dismissal as saying, "it (his dismissal) will cause irreparable harm to the paper. He has brought a new momentum to the paper and is the only editor who constantly encouraged us in our stories with advice and follow-up ideas." Another said, "There is already an air of disillusionment and demoralization." A staffer said, "Nobody has told us to stop writing anti-government articles but the unspoken message is to cool it and this is reflected in the paper." Romesh Thapar, the editor of Seminar, was quoted by India Today as saying "Shourie's leaving is not an internal matter at all. It affects all of us in the profession. Goenka and Arun are a two-man army and it would be tragic if both were to destroy each other in the bargain. The only winner, I fear, will be the ruling party."

An important question is where is Shourie going to find a platform to match the 3-million readers he had with the Express. Given the state of affairs, it is very unlikely that any other national daily is going to embrace Shourie.

Cabinet Reshuffles and Expansions

ARUN SHOURIE

dents and the third is about to be replaced.

What do all these shuffles and reshuffles show?

First, no ministry in Indira Gandhi's government is better administered today than it was two years ago. In spite of inducting forty additional persons into her council of ministers since January 1980, that is in spite of enlarging the council threefold, she has not been able to improve its performance or its talent quotient one bit.

Second, far from finding better talent, Mrs Gandhi has not been able to do even the least bit towards even the much more elementary tasks, such as that of rationalizing the distribution of work among such ministers as she has, of rationalizing the grouping of departments. Indeed, there has been considerable regression. Civil aviation is today clubbed with civil supplies. Industry, railways and works, housing and parliamentary affairs are three separate ministries, each under a different cabinet minister. But as a deputy minister, Mallikarjun straddles railways and parliamentary affairs, and Kalp Nath Rai straddles industry and parliamentary affairs. On Sept. 2, coal was given to N.D. Tiwari; on Sept. 7 to Shiv Shankar. On Sept. 2, C.P.N. Singh got ecology among other things. On Sept. 7 he lost it. Even with what he has left, Singh will straddle four completely unrelated departments.

Third, in no state has Mrs Gandhi been able to ensure a better or more stable government in spite of all her permutations and combinations. In Maharashtra her party has had 238 of 288 MLAs (over 80% of the total) and yet poor Bhosale is running scared. In Andhra it has had around 246 of 295 MLAs (around 85% of the total), and yet she has had to change

[Not much of Arun Shourie's writing was published in the Indian Express towards the end. The following appears to be the only major article that was printed after he exposed the Kuo oil deal in July. Ed.]

Since Indira Gandhi returned to power in January 1980 she has constituted, reconstituted, expanded, shuffled, and reshuffled her Council of Ministers which was a compact of 21 in January 1980 — and much was made of this at that time — and is now a motley crew of 61. A minister like P.C.Sethi has been tried in four portfolios. Railways and Labor have been tried among four ministers apiece.

In addition Gandhi has appointed and replaced chief ministers, pradesh Congress committee chiefs, general secretaries of the party and several other sundries. Several of these personages have done their share of expanding, re-expanding, shuffling, re-shuffling. Thus for instance UP has had two chief ministers and the UP cabinet has been expanded seven times and reshuffled four times. A minister like Vidya Bhushan, an industrialist from Muzaffarnagar, has held five portfolios, moving with equanimity from forests to export promotion to sports to tourism to excise. A department like forests has changed hands five times in the same period.

In between ministerial shuffles, officials have been shuffled. UP for instance, has had three chief secretaries, three home secretaries, and four IGs of police since mid-1980. In addition, there have been four "major reshuffles" of secretaries in the state secretariat and four of the police hierarchy. In MP, major reshuffles of secretaries have been six and of the police five.

The state party units are little different. UP has had three state unit presi-

chief ministers four times in two years.

Far from ensuring better performance of the state governments, the permutations and combinations have not been able to even curb dissidents within her party. Gujarat is a typical case. When Madhavsingh Solanki became the chief minister in June 1980 he was asked to relinquish the presidency of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee on the principle that the same person should not be both the head of government and head of the party, a principle that, as you know, applies to everyone, except you know who. To ensure, it was said, that the party does not become a focus of dissidence, a soft, noncontroversial and then ailing man, Maldevji Odedra, was appointed PCC-I chief. Dissidence mounted anyhow. Odedra died. To assuage the dis-

(continued on p.7)

INDIAN PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION IN NORTH AMERICA

President: Harinder Mahil, Vancouver
Secretary: Dr. Shree Mulay, Montreal
Central Office:

IPANA
P.O. Box 69646, Stn. "K"
Vancouver, B.C. V5K 4W7
Canada

Units:

Albany: Box 22940, Stn. A
SUNY Albany, NY 12222
Boston: P.O. Box 120, MIT Branch
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

Montreal: P.O. Box 37
Westmount Que. H3Z 2T1

New Jersey: P.O. Box 8
Oakhurst, N.J. 07755

New York: P.O. Box 665
New York, NY 10025

Toronto: P.O. Box 223, Stn. S
Toronto, Ont.

INDIA NOW is published every month by IPANA, P.O. Box 665, Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025, USA.

Annual subscriptions are \$10 in the US and Canada, \$16 overseas.

For institutions and libraries, subscriptions are \$16 in the US and Canada, \$20 overseas.

Correspondence from Canada and overseas should be sent to the Montreal address.

I am enclosing \$... to cover the following subscriptions:

FOR MYSELF

Name:
Address:

☐ Renewal ☐ New

FOR FRIENDS

Name:
Address:

☐ Renewal ☐ New

Name:
Address:

☐ Subscription ☐ Sample

DECEMBER 1982 INDIA NOW
\$801 888M30001 W00N 00000

Asiad Held Amid Controversies

KISHAN BAJWA

Although Sports Minister Buta Singh told Parliament in the first week of November that all arrangements for the 9th Asian Games scheduled to start in New Delhi on November 19 had been completed, there have been several reports in the press pointing out the inadequacies of the preparations. More than 5000 competitors and officials from 31 countries are expected to participate in the 21-event Asiad. India plans to have the largest number of athletes numbering 644 whereas Japan which won the largest number of golds in the last games at Bangkok in 1978 will have 463 athletes followed by China with 445.

Tremendous security precautions were being undertaken to ward off any demonstration and disturbance caused by Akali Dal which was to launch a daily morcha courting arrests near the sites of the Asiad. There was also a report about some of the opposition parties organizing a demonstration against the extravagant international event which was going to cost the poor people of India hundred of millions of dollars which could have been better spent. Further, on October 31, a meeting at Wardha, Maharashtra, of farmers' organizations from various parts of India called upon farmers to boycott the sale of milk and vegetables on November 19 to show the united strength of the farmers and make aware problems faced by farmers.

The trial games held during September to test the facilities were reportedly held in an atmosphere of disorder and confusion. Among many problems, some were: the tiles in the swimming pool were coming off with the water seeping in; the computers to control the score boards, timers, etc., did not work; there were not adequate facilities for providing first aid and relief measures to athletes.

Recently, there was tremendous chaos at a football match played at the Jawaharlal Nehru stadium as the organizers were not able to control the crowd of 60,000 and the police lathicharged. There were no signs telling people where to enter; as a result they swarmed from gate to gate till they eventually got fed up and tried to barge in anywhere.

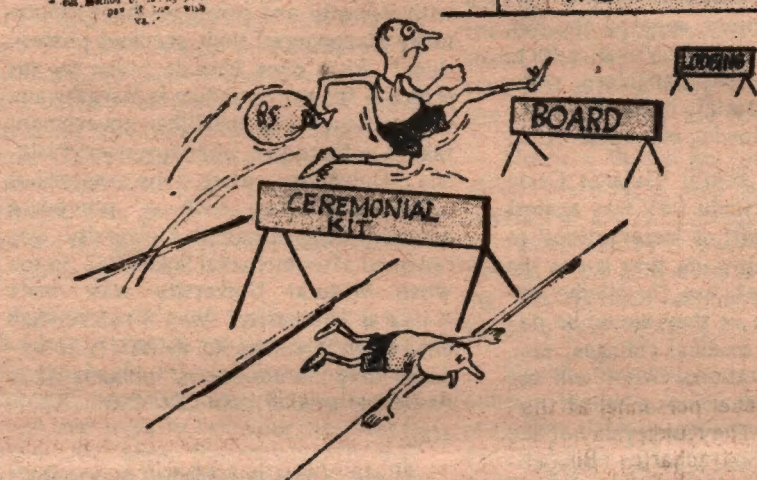
It was recently reported that the underwater viewing gallery of the swimming pool will not be used and a plan for airconditioning the pool has been abandoned because the equipment could not be installed in time. A few weeks before the games were to start, the Indian badminton team went on a hunger strike protesting against the faulty lighting system which caused a glare while taking high tosses. A severe shortage of hotel rooms is feared since private hotel owners who had promised 3,000 rooms in 12 new hotels are expected to complete only half of them.

TOTAL ASIAD COST

Buta Singh reported to Parliament that the total expenditure on the games would be about Rs 650 million as against Rs 600 million approved by the House. The Indian Express quoted journalist Romesh Thapar as saying that the actual cost of the games would be over Rs 10 billion if the added facilities like the 6 overpasses, their supporting systems, luxury hotels and other costs were included.

It is unlikely that the government can make any money from the TV rights and arena advertisements. Negotiations with a Los Angeles promoter, Vipin Sahgal for the sale of TV rights to the games broke down more than a month ago. Dubai-based Meetco Company had been given the sole rights to obtain arena advertising but it did not fulfill a financial commit-

Sportsmen asked to pay for board and lodging



from Indian Express

ment. More than \$300,000 of the company's money in Indian banks was frozen by the Delhi High Court on Nov. 2 on a petition by the government. A West German company, which was to produce lapel pins and commemorative badges for the games, has sued the organizing committee of the Asiad for breach of contract in the International Court of Justice in Hague.

There were unofficial reports a few weeks before the games that the Indian Olympic Association had asked the athletes selected for the Asiad to pay Rs 5,565 each for the kit, boarding and lodging. Shortly before the games were to start, it was unclear what the government and the organizing committee had decided about athletes who could not

pay. Athletes who went to the Commonwealth Games at Brisbane in October had to pay Rs 7,000 each. The Indian Express commented in an editorial: "There is no question of a penalty of any sort ... in the case of one of the hotels which has defaulted in its payment to the NDMC. Of the Rs 178 lakhs due from the hotel at the time of entering the land, it had paid only Rs 15 lakhs until a few days ago. ... But an athlete who can not arrange Rs 5,565 will not participate in the Games!"

According to UPI, the expensive "five-star" hotels specially built for the games were left with hundreds of empty rooms. Apparently, the organizers had estimated that over 1,000 American and European tourists would come to watch the games and were concerned about a possible shortage of rooms.

Opposition to Bihar Press Bill Continues

KISHAN BAJWA

The opposition to the Bihar Press Act has continued to grow more widespread as the central government has still not announced its decision whether to ask the President to approve it. Meanwhile, in a discussion on the bill on Oct. 14 in Rajya Sabha, Indira Gandhi said that she "neither endorsed nor rejected" the bill since she had not yet "read it." This however has not stopped the PM from making statements in Parliament as well as in speeches concerning the bill in which she has denounced the journalists and the press for agitating against the bill. According to the Bihar state government of Jagannath Mishra, the bill is to curb yellow journalism and scurrilous writing.

DELHI DEMONSTRATION

More than 3000 journalists representing publications from all over the country as well as the two unions, Indian Federation of Working Journalists and the pro-Gandhi National Union of Journalists, and leaders of every national press organization demonstrated in New Delhi on Oct. 10 to demand the withdrawal of the Bihar press act. They marched from Connaught Place to the Boat Club wearing black armbands and carrying placards against the bill.

At the Boat Club rally, the leaders of various news organizations and senior journalists unanimously condemned the bill. The journalists were urged to maintain their solidarity to defeat the legislation. Supporters of Indira Gandhi, including Khushwant Singh, editor of the Hindustan Times, and M. Chalapati Rau, the former editor of the National Herald, were also present at the rally.

Moreover, the president of the pro-Congress(1) Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), N.K. Bhatt, said that the demonstration was an important step in protecting press freedom and he extended support of the 4-million-strong trade union to all genuine demands of journalists. Representatives of various journalist groups said that the country-wide agitation should not be abandoned

even as they negotiated with the government. It was also pointed out that their agitation had already met with success because the government was now seeking to modify the bill.

The day after the rally, several opposition members in Lok Sabha called on the government to withhold its recommendation for the President's approval of the bill. The minister for information and broadcasting, N.K.P. Salve, said the bill would not receive Presidential consent until the government had discussed it with representatives of major news organizations. He rejected a suggestion that called for a constitutional amendment to safeguard the freedom of the press saying that there was no need for such legislation.

PROCESSION IN PATNA

About 30 youth and student groups organized a protest in Patna against the press bill on October 12. When the participants were marching to the governor's residence to present a petition against the bill, the police lathi-charged and teargassed the procession because of which at least 30 persons including an MP of Lok Dal (Charan), Jag Pal Singh, was injured. The next day, most opposition members of Lok Sabha walked out to protest the police action when Speaker Balam Jakhar refused to allow a discussion of the episode.

2 HARIJANS KILLED

In a related development, two Harijans were reportedly killed by musclemen of powerful landlords in Buhobar village in Gaya district in Bihar. The assailants chopped off the limbs of the two Harijans and scattered them over the Harijan colony to create fear among Harijans. According to the president of the Bihar unit of Yuva Lok Dal (K), Jabir Hussain, one of them had been earlier beaten by the police in Patna during the procession of 30 youth organizations against the Bihar press bill.

SEMINAR IN NYC CRITICAL

Meanwhile, a resolution adopted at a

seminar on press freedom held in the last week of Oct. in New York city expressed concern over the implications of the Bihar press bill because it could lead to abuses and curb news-media rights. The resolution also declared that there should be no tampering with the principle of press freedom in India.

The seminar heard S. Nihal Singh, the former editor of the Indian Express and the Statesman who said he expected the bill to undergo changes as a result of objections because "the government has bitten off more than they can chew." Singh, who is now with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, called the movement by journalists against the bill a healthy development but warned against expecting too much from them. He said that the press's role during the Emergency, when civil liberties were suspended and the press was censored, was not "particularly impressive" in opposing the government for curbing media rights.

Jyoti Basu Backs Punjab Autonomy

West Bengal's Chief Minister Jyoti Basu has spoken in favor of the Akali Dal's Anandpur resolution which calls for a greater autonomy for Punjab and other states. Basu said, "This is what our party, CPM, has been insisting on and I think that the time has come to have a second look at the constitution so as to redefine center-state relations in the light of the experience gained in the last 32 years."

Basu also commented that the country must accept the federal principle and the central government was under an erroneous impression that more powers to the states would weaken the center. Basu was of the view that instead, it would strengthen the center. Basu said that some Sikh leaders had come to him for support of the Anandpur resolution and he had told them that their demand for decentralization of power was justified but their problem was that they had not been able to win Hindus also to be part of their agitation.

Amnesty Report on India

Amnesty International has expressed concern over the increasing use of preventive detention, police brutality, torture and deaths in police custody and "police encounters" in India. The report which covered 1981 was particularly critical of what it called human rights violations in Tamil Nadu, Andhra, Madhya Pradesh and Assam.

The report said that during the last 10 years, Amnesty had received reports from almost every state in India of people dying in "police encounters" when there was direct evidence that they had in fact been killed by the police after being tortured.

In a letter to the Indian president, the organization said that it was not aware of any cases where criminal proceedings against individual police officers involved had been instituted and completed. It also mentioned several instances reported in the Indian press where policemen identified in encounter killings had in fact been financially rewarded.

The report detailed its efforts to get the MP govt to establish an independent inquiry into allegations that 13 youths were tortured in the police station in Chhatapur by being hung by their ankles from the ceiling, beaten with sticks, given electric shocks, and made to sit on a sharpened bamboo spike and pressed down by police constables.

The report also said that Amnesty did not get any response from the state government of Tamil Nadu about its inquiries on some specific cases, in particular the alleged murder of Natarajan by the police after torturing him.

Tarkunde Beaten up
by Madurai Police p7

It's Do or Die on Ambedkar University

DALIT VOICE

[On Sept. 17, a non-official Bill to rename the Marathwada University after Dr B.R. Ambedkar was moved in the Maharashtra legislature by a Janata member. The state government opposed the Bill, which was defeated. Dalit Voice, a fortnightly published from Bangalore, commented in an editorial, from which we have taken the following excerpts. — Ed.]

"In the more brutal 'Gujarat Caste War' of 1981 the Hindu fury was against an economic benefit of 'reservations' to dalits. But in Marathwada that is not the case. In the Gujarat case, the Hindus justified the violence as they would be deprived of seats in medical colleges, etc., because of reservations. What will the Hindus lose by renaming a university? Any expenditure? They simply do not like their university named after an Untouchable. Therefore, the Marathwada Caste War will go down in history as a unique event once for all exposing Hindu 'tolerance', their 'nonviolence', etc."

"The Marathwada syndrome has once again proved that it is not the government that is governing India. In 1978, the government itself moved a resolution in both the houses of the legislature which unanimously voted in favor of renaming the university. But it was immediately opposed by RSS, some communal Brahmins and the Maratha landed gentry. The government was then overruled by the ruling class. Thousands of dalits were hunted down like rabbits. Their wells poisoned. Countless murdered. Government got paralysed. Hatred enveloped the air. And that made some dalits demand a separate Dalitastan. The 1978 debacle for the government and the rebuff to the legislature should once for all convince us that the real power lies not with the government but with the ruling class which can veto anything that goes against its class-caste interests. India's ruling class is above everything. Above law. Above the constitution. Above the country."

"Chief Minister Balasaheb Bhosale, a Maratha, has offered a cunning solution: 'the need to take the people of Marathwada along by working for a change of their attitude'. That means until there is change of heart of the 'people' dalits will have to wait. But who are these 'people'? Does he mean to say the dalits and their host of sympathizers are not people? And only RSS and Marathas — owners of property and privileges — who are opposing the dalits are people? Does

he mean to say that until the fascists change their heart, the dalits have to wait? Has anybody heard of a tiger changing its heart towards the lamb? Is there any case in history where those with property and privileges have voluntarily surrendered their precious possessions? What does Bhosale mean by his proposal for a referendum in Marathwada on this issue? Did the Bihar government take a referendum when it renamed Mithila University after the notorious L.N. Mishra? Was such a procedure adopted when Udaipur University was renamed after Mohanlal Sukhadia? So too when Madurai University was made Kamaraj University? Why a referendum only when it comes to dalits? Is it because they are considered subhumans? Is Ambedkar smaller than L.N. Mishra, Kamaraj?"

[Dalit Voice is published by the Dalit Sahitya Academy, 109/7th Cross, Palace Lower Orchards, Bangalore 560 003]

Punjab Crisis: Background

V. KUMAR

As we go press, Harchand Singh Longowal's threats to disrupt the Asian Games in Delhi have not yet materialized. No doubt this has not been for lack of trying by volunteers ready to defy the authorities. The police in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi have been especially active. Several thousand would-be demonstrators have been arrested or forcibly prevented from reaching the site of the jamboree going on in the capital. Buses, trucks and cars are being stopped on the highways and by-ways leading to Delhi and predictable announcements of the discoveries of arms caches are being made. While the show of force may prevent Longowal and his followers from making good on their immediate threats, it is scarcely a credible method for restoring stability and solving the crisis created in the border state.

The word "created" is perhaps appropriate in the context of the situation pre-

vailing in Punjab over the last year and a half. Regional or parochial agitations based on the demands and grievances of linguistic, caste or religious groups are nothing new to India. In practically every part of the country there exists, as it were, a memory bank of historical injustices, real or imagined, which lie around like so much dry tinder waiting for a spark to set them aflame. Within the contours of the "democratic" polity prevailing in the country, this spark has most frequently been provided by the ambitions of regional or caste-based factions and their political leaders anxious to catapult themselves to power and obtain the pelf and rewards due to holders of political office. Their journey to power has, in many cases, been greatly facilitated by the sacrifices of the victims, witting and unwitting; of such agitations who fell from the blows of official lathis or the bullets from official guns. Police repression, in fact, has been the main constant factor, in an otherwise complex mix of political maneuvering and accommodation, in the government's response to such agitations. That is the only way a part of the state power knows how to react to any disturbance to the status quo. (In many other agitations spurred by much more just and real grievances of the people, police repression is often the only response).

The basic ingredients of the current Punjab agitation have been around for a long time. The demands for a greater allocation of the Ravi-Beas waters, for Chandigarh to be the sole capital, etc., are over a decade old. The slogan of Khalistan predates partition and independence of the country and lay more or less dormant for 35 years till it was revived very recently. What has, perhaps, "created" this crisis, in the sense of allowing it to reach its current alarming proportions, is the highly personalized style evolved by Indira Gandhi and her late son Sanjay for management and conflict resolution at the regional and national political levels. This style has involved, among other things, a ruthless undercutting and discrediting of any regional political leaders, even those belonging to her own party, who showed even a remote possibility of evolving a stable power base of their own which could pose a future challenge to Gandhi's own dominance; the induction of gangsters and thugs into the political process to settle scores; and the tacit encouragement of paralysis in state administration when this could be utilized in some way to her own political benefit. Now, the chickens of this style of government are finally coming home to roost.

Punjab is a good case in point. It is an open secret that Zail Singh, Indira Gandhi's self-acknowledged "servant" (and now occupying the office of the President of India), and his cohorts encouraged and promoted the Bhindranwale phenomenon, first as a means of undercutting the moderate Akali Dal leadership and the earlier Akali-Janata coalition when it was in power and later for keeping his rival, Darbara Singh, now chief minister of Punjab, off balance. It is hard to understand otherwise how Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a man with murder charges on his head, was permitted to roam around freely for almost two years making extremist speeches in public, rousing his supporters to action and baiting the moderate Akali leaders for insufficient devotion to the Khalsa cause.

Now, the genuine economic problems faced by Punjab farmers and the rising discontent among unemployed youth (endemic to every region) have meshed with the older demands for more autonomy and greater share of resources, under extremist slogans of the fringe element of the Akalis to create a situation which is getting out of control. The moderate section of the Akalis has been discredited; it has no option but to line up behind the extremists or face oblivion. The only constant among the variables in this situation is the inevitable police repression. A great number of innocent people have, wittingly and unwittingly, fallen victim to police lathis and police bullets.

EDITORIAL

Condemn Violence and Opportunism of Khalistanis

On Sunday, November 14, about 300 members of the East Indian community in Toronto gathered in front of the Indian consulate to protest the persecution of Sikhs by the Indian government and to support the legitimate demands of the people of Punjab. During this peaceful demonstration, two supporters of the Khalistan movement shot and severely wounded a community activist, Sukhraj Singh, two other demonstrators and an Indian police officer who tried to intervene.

IPANA condemns this act of fanatical violence which is a disgrace to the entire Indian community. This incident exposes the hypocrisy of the communalist and religious chauvinists who can shed tears for the persecution of Sikhs in Punjab but have not hesitation in trying to kill fellow Sikhs in Canada with whom they have political differences.

These gunmen do not represent the East Indian community. It is urgently important for members of our community to be united in order to fight the many forms

of discrimination and racism we all face as members of our community. And we must be united in demanding justice and democratic rights for our people in India and in raising our voice against the authoritarian regime of Indira Gandhi. These fanatics who attempt to split our community with their violence not only bring us pain and disgrace, but serve the interests of our enemies. We must unite and denounce them.

A very sad consequence of this kind of violence is that it frightens and disgusts people and keeps them away from all forms of political action. We appeal to our community not to be intimidated by these fanatics.

Let us unite in our common struggle and make it clear to all that these violent fanatics can neither belong with us nor intimidate us. Let us carry on with our struggles for social, political and economic equality in the Canadian society.

We express our deepest sympathies to the injured people and their families who are the victims of this fanatical violence.

Bihar People's Front — A View

P.K. KRUPAKARAN

The propensity of the landless laborers in some parts of South Bihar to organize themselves for a confrontation with the landholders on the issue of minimum wages has been steadily increasing over the last 18 months.

This is particularly true in Patna, Gaya, Bhojpur and Rohtas districts, parts of which are rich agricultural tracts because of canal irrigation facility.

It is not easy for a ministry manned by representatives of the landholding classes to make up its mind to implement egalitarian programs for the downtrodden. Take for instance the upward revision of wages for farm laborers. The decision was taken in July this year after four years of prodding by the Union Labor Ministry.

When this happened at last, thanks to the initiative of the Labor Commissioner, the ministers were, according to some officials, beside themselves with rage. One of them is understood to have suggested that the notification revising the wages be rescinded. Apparently he had the support of other ministers. They refrained from it for fear of displeasing the Center.

However they are doing the next best thing possible. They are not serious about implementing the minimum wages. This is evident from the way the government discontinued the program to train Harijan



from Indian Express

leaders in educating the landless laborers and enabling them to file complaints regarding wages before the appropriate authorities to secure payment of their wage dues.

It is in this context that one has to view recent developments culminating in the formation of the Indian People's Front.

The Front surprised everyone on October 15 when it organized a procession and demonstration by 30,000 people in Patna to protest the Press Bill, the penal code amendment bill, and the "failure" of the government to enforce the minimum wages in the rural areas. That it is a

growing organization is beyond doubt.

Those who criticize the activities of the Front and its unacknowledged "philosophy of violence," however, admit that the only way to "annihilate" it lies in implementing the welfare schemes for the weaker sections.

That is, of course, up to the government. There comes the rub. The government's undeclared desire not to hurt the vested interests in the farming sector is in conflict with its declared sympathies for the underdogs. Where then should one look for the solution?

(from the Indian Express)

Ethnic Lists Maintained by Quebec Govt

(continued from p.1)

Parti Quebecois has asserted more than any party in the past French national rights in the predominantly (80%) French-speaking province of Canada.

The entire list with front page headlines was printed by the English daily newspaper, the Montreal Gazette on November 3 and 4. Members of the Liberal opposition demanded the resignation of Parti Quebecois cultural minister, Gerard Godin. The Canadian Federal Minister, James Fleming, characterized the list as a "terrible practice," which is a "danger to democracy" and that "the Federal government would not do anything like this." Gerard McKenzie, Vice-

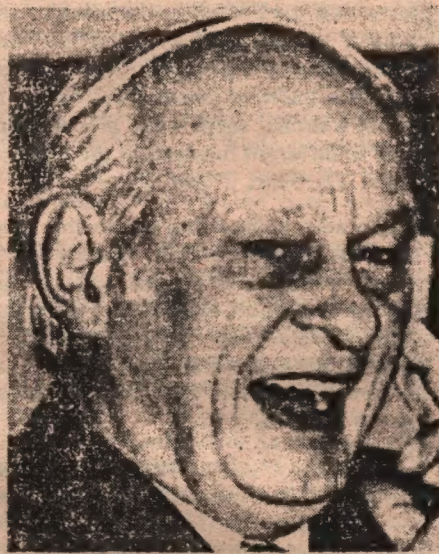
President of Quebec Human Rights, found the list "revolting" and criticized the fact that the list includes in some instances political persuasions as well as alleged criminal records.

Leaders of various ethnic communities, especially from the Italian community which has 166 in the list, the largest number from any ethnic group, expressed strong discomfort over the list.

In the meantime, Premier Rene Levesque of Parti Quebecois expressed his disapproval of mentioning political persuasions and criminal records in the small number of cases.



Canada's Federal Multiculturalism Minister James Fleming



Quebec Premier Rene Levesque

Ottawa Does It Too

Our Montreal Correspondent

Within a week after Federal Multiculturalism Minister James Fleming stated in Canadian Parliament that "the Federal government would not do anything like this" while commenting on a list of ethnic organizations and leaders prepared by the Parti Quebecois, it was revealed that the Federal government has maintained such a black list since 1974. In contrast to the Quebec list which was purportedly used for canvassing during the elections and in general contained little secret information about groups or individuals, the federal list is outright political. According to newspapers, the federal list contains details of the group's politics such as "communist" or "an extremely left-wing, worldwide political movement."

Despite the political nature of the federal ethnic list, Fleming said that this list contains nothing which compares to the Quebec list. Fleming ordered the des-

truction of copies of the 100-page book, entitled "A Revised Handbook of Selected Ethnic Organizations in Canada," and prepared in 1974.

The preface to the book states that it "should remain strictly confidential." In the meantime, Robert Kaplan, Solicitor-General of Canada, admitted that the secret book was used by the Security Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for security clearance, citizenship, and immigration purposes. In yet another statement, Kaplan also admitted that the book "may also have been used for background and contextual information for other security reports" by RCMP.

The list of groups was originally drawn up in the 1960's under a Conservative government and maintained by subsequent governments, including the present Liberal government headed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau.

Politicians Speak at Sikh Temple in Toronto

Our Toronto Correspondent

The recent federal elections in the Broadview-Greenwood area in Toronto brought into focus the three main parties in Canada regarding issues of concern to voters. Especially for Indians living in this area, the election became of central interest.

The area has high concentrations of Greeks, Chinese and Indians. There were four main contenders - O'Connor (Liberal), Fatsis (Progressive Conservative), Lynn McDonald (New Democratic Party), and Peter Worthington (Independent). As the race drew to a close, the candidates being closely watched were Fatsis, McDonald and Worthington.

Fatsis, a Greek-Canadian, played on ethnic politics trying to get the Greek votes. McDonald based her campaign on economic issues of high unemployment, inflation, immigration laws and so on. Worthington, ex-editor of Toronto Sun and self-avowed reactionary, had earlier split from the PC after being defeated in a leadership race. He, along with the Sun, is known as the right wing voice of the city, strongly opposed to multiculturalism

and demands for equal rights by immigrants, women and other oppressed groups.

All candidates, except Worthington, appeared at the Pape Gurudwara at Pape Ave and Gerard St, which falls in the area. On October 10, O'Connor and McDonald addressed the Sikh audience in the temple. O'Connor made some inconsequential statements about Indians facing discrimination in Toronto and expressing his respect for the rich Sikh cultural heritage. McDonald, on the other hand, touched on all the major concerns in the Indian community. She pointed out the discriminatory nature of the immigration laws in the application of the visa system to Indians. She also pointed to the unfair treatment given to the Indian refugees who had been detained in airport motels and detention centers for the past year. She urged that laws, whatever they are, should be equally applied to all, no matter what the ethnicity.

The final results were in on October 12. McDonald won over Worthington by about 2,000 votes. Fatsis and O'Connor trailed far behind.

Sukhraj and Gurmeet, two community

Chandwani Wins Award for Exposing Racism

Ashok Chandwani and Glen Allen were the winners of the 1982 Media Human Rights Awards for a series of articles they wrote for the Montreal Gazette in April.

In the series of 6 articles, Chandwani and Allen presented evidence of racism against East Indians, Canadian Indians, and Canadian Blacks. The articles examined the institutionalization of racism, racist attitudes among school children, and violence against the East Indian community, particularly in Vancouver.



Ashok Chandwani

Pesticide Kills Indian Farmworker in BC

Jarnail Singh Deol, 20, collapsed in a cauliflower field on October 30 in Surrey near Vancouver in British Columbia and later died of pesticide poisoning. Dr. Bill Meekison of the Boundary Health Unit is quoted by the Toronto Star newspaper as saying "there is no doubt in my mind he had been exposed to organo-phosphate poisoning from the pesticides." The local coroner is investigating the case.

Earlier, Deol had spent several days in hospital in September after he began vomiting and frothing at the mouth. He had to return to the hospital the same day he was discharged because he was still sick. When he was released again, he was involved in a car accident. Following several incidents of erratic behavior, he un-

derwent psychiatric assessment and a psychiatrist's report suggested toxic psychosis resulting from pesticides.

The police reportedly found two coffee mugs containing traces of the pesticide Monitor near where Deol collapsed. A police spokesperson said that because of the substance's foul odor it was unlikely that anyone could have drunk the substance without realizing that it was unpalatable. Authorities have however speculated that Deol might have drunk the pesticide after becoming unbalanced from previous exposure to it. An official of the Surrey police told India Abroad that there was no apparent reason to believe that Deol had taken his own life.

CFU Demands Strict Regulation on Pesticide Use

The Canadian Farmworkers Union (CFU) has urged the Workers Compensation Board to adopt strict regulations governing the use of pesticides. CFU president Raj Chouhan said that such regulations were necessary to put an end to dangerous practices in the fruit, berry and vegetable farms of the province.

Meanwhile, CFU released the results of a survey initiated by the Abbotsford-Sumas Community Services Society and tabulated at Simon Fraser University. Random sampling of farmworkers in the Fraser Valley and the Okanagan region showed that 8 of every 10 farmworkers were regularly exposed to pesticides and 2 out of 10 often breathed pesticide fumes while at work. Many of the pesticides are suspected to cause cancer. Growers and farmworkers have no idea how to handle the chemicals.

The survey released by CFU has prompted the environmental health committee of the British Columbia Medical Association to ask the Workers compensation board to draft comprehensive safeguards to protect the farmworkers against serious health hazards posed by the indiscriminate use of pesticides. Dr.

Eric Young, head of the association's environmental health committee, said that the doctors wanted the board to act on its 12 recommendations regarding pesticide use and worker safety. According to Young, the danger of pesticides used in Fraser and Okanagan Valleys was well known and studies had shown that there was a higher incidence of a variety of cancers in these two areas. But there is little effective regulation or control of the use of pesticides. Young added that the board should regularly monitor sites to ensure that the rules were being enforced and obeyed.

Other recommendations of the medical association included enacting laws to guarantee protection for farm workers, standards to govern specifications, maintenance and inspection of pesticide equipment and setting maximum levels of exposures for all pesticides. Further, young children and babies who accompany the women farm workers must be protected against pesticide spraying.

The Workers Compensation Board has declined any comment on the issue.

(Courtesy: India Abroad)

Teens Jailed for Attacking Pak Family

Two members of a Toronto teen gang who beat and racially insulted a Pakistani family have each been sentenced to three months. William Newton, 19, of Morning-side Dr., Mississauga, and William Bachinski, 17, of Tandridge Cres., Etobicoke, pleaded guilty in County Court to the reduced charge of common assault against Amir Din, 33, and his 26-year-old wife Tasneem, who shielded their sons, 4 and 5, from attack in the lobby of their Tan-

dridge Ave. apartment building on May 2, 1980.

In what the police described at the time as "an absolutely unprovoked and disgusting incident," the family was surrounded by up to 10 teens as they entered the lobby, returning from grocery shopping.

Din told the police the family tried to escape into the elevator, but a juvenile girl pressed the button to keep the door open and the attack continued.

After he was punched in the face, he dropped the groceries containing bottles of pop, Din said. The bottles shattered and some of the gang began jabbing at him with the shards, cutting his hand.

Din said he and his wife threw themselves to the elevator floor to protect their sons and were kicked by the gang.

workers, said they would support whoever would help the community in its struggle against the visa system and the refugee policies of the Canadian government. They will now be watching McDonald closely to see if she will genuinely defend our interests as an MP in Ottawa.

The activists also called on Indians to give full support to the Pape Sikh temple, which sponsored the candidates' forum. They praised the temple's active and positive role of supporting people's struggles and demands.

Well before the Shiva Ratri festival on March 26, 1982, one Surendra Barni of Shahghasa in Meerut claimed to have had a dream in which Lord Shiva appeared in a fierce mood blaming the people of Shahghasa for having neglected him. Barni claimed to be overawed by his dream and observed a fast of 40 days. Subsequently he demanded a temple in the area.

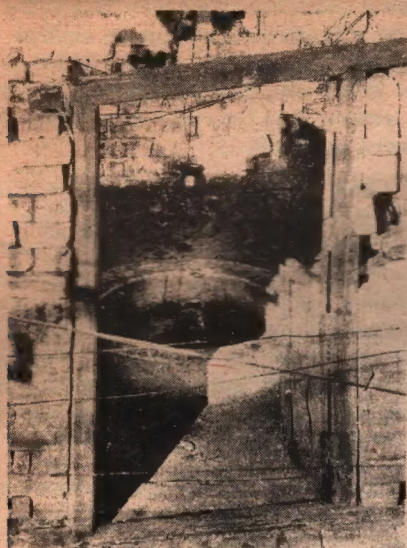
SHAHGHASA

Shahghasa is a busy commercial locality of Meerut. It contains mainly cloth shops owned by Hindu traders who buy their cloth from Muslim weavers. It is a narrow street. Near one end of the street, there is a peepal tree squeezed between a pan shop and a piao (a water hut). Behind the piao, there is a high circular wall around a well, presently guarded by a number of men and women of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC). It is generally believed that the high walls around the well were erected following trouble in the area in 1939 and again in 1946 when some persons were killed and thrown into the well.

Adjacent to the well, in an extremely narrow by-lane, there is a house belonging to a Muslim advocate, Qazi Zaheeruddin. Opposite the well, there is some land which Zaheeruddin is alleged to have usurped. There are also 3 shops adjoining the well. These shops and the well are the property of a Hindu trust which is supposed to manage the piao (the trust is not registered and there is no official record).

CLAIMS OF TEMPLE

The spot near the well behind the piao was considered an ideal location for a temple. Accordingly, a Peepaleswar Mahadev Mandir Jeevanoddhar Samiti was launched. The deserted room over the three shops was chosen as the site of the Mahadev temple. Coincidentally a Shiva Ling was also discovered. Plans were made in a hurry and on the Shiva Ratri day, a round-the-clock Akhand Path was organized with a lot of fanfare. The then superintendent of police allegedly personally intervened and a ghanta (bell) was installed and an evening arti was started. Soon, the arti became a regular practice.



The Shiva temple. - India Today

CLAIMS OF MAZAR

Qazi Zaheer Ahmed, it is alleged, has had his eye on the shops as well as the well. Even before the proponents of the Mahadev Temple made their presence really felt, Qazi Zaheer declared that the small patch of land near the well was in fact, the mazar of a Pir. No one even among the most devout Muslims had heard of this Pir before the Qazi raised the bogey of the mazar.

RSS AND VHP FACTOR

The dispute between Qazi Zaheer and a small group of Hindus was eventually used by the organized forces to create large scale communal tensions. Balasaheb Deoras, the RSS chief, visited Meerut in January 1982 and a rally was held in his honor. The SP and the Additional District Magistrate (ADM) are said to have saluted Balasaheb publicly. Tensions began to mount in Meerut after his visit. RSS and VHP stepped up their activities throughout August and September. Sunder Singh Bhandari and M.P. Tripathi also visited the city. The VHP held a meeting of its national committee in Varanasi from Sept. 19 to 21 in which it passed a resolution that if a disputed temple in Meerut

Meerut Riots

was not unlocked by the administration, the VHP would start a statewide agitation. On Oct. 2 and 3, the RSS-dominated BJP youth organization held a convention at Allahabad and called for vigilance against "anti-national elements." All of this was reported prominently in the local Hindi press, which aggravated tensions.

IMAM'S ROLE

The Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Maulana Syed Abdullah Bukhari, visited Meerut on August 21 and is reported to have addressed a closed door meeting in the mosque at Shah Pir Gate attended by 300 to 400 Muslims. He visited the town again on Sept. 4-5 and is reported to have gone around the mosques where pig meat was found. Obviously, he was not on a mere survey of the mosques.

INQUIRY LAUNCHED

As tension grew following March 26 developments, the district administration called a meeting of about 35 persons from both communities in Kotwali on April 21. It was decided that a magisterial inquiry would be conducted into the claims and counter-claims of the mazar and the Mahadev temple. It was agreed that pending the findings of the inquiry, the status quo would be maintained, according to which only one person would be allowed to go up to the temple and offer arti and no group activity was to be allowed. Subsequently, a newly appointed Pujari, Ram Bhole, was allowed with another to perform arti.

JANMASHTAMI ARTI

On August 12 night, Janmashtami day, some 400-500 persons assembled at the Kotwali around 10:30 and raised angry complaints that the door to the temple had been locked by the police. The late night protesters demanded a special arti at midnight; permission was denied as the inquiry was not yet complete. The protesters went straight to Shahghasa, forced open the door of the temple and performed a midnight arti with enthusiasm. Mohanlal Kapur, an ex-MLA belonging to BJP, and Brahmopal Singh, the president of the city BJP, reportedly led the arti. The demand for a midnight arti on Janmashtami, which is Krishna's birthday, seemed unconvincing since the temple was dedicated to Shiva. Further, the arti was not a mere solemn observance of a purely religious function; instead, loud chanting of Har Har Mahadev (while performing Janmashtami rites) was indeed an act of provocation.

The following morning after four of the late night protesters were arrested, another group of 200-odd demonstrators led by Mohanlal Kapur stormed the Kotwali demanding release of the four. There, 19 more were taken into custody. Later, Congress(I) president Dharam Devkar, who is pro-RSS and is seeking BJP support to become the mayor, intervened and got the arrested persons released.

INQUIRY FINDINGS NOT RELEASED

Meanwhile the inquiry was completed by magistrate Dubey and understandably

submitted these to the DM to be announced on August 20. But before this could be done, a self-appointed panel of 4 citizens, 2 Muslims and 2 Hindus, produced a document of accord which was said to be have been arrived at and welcomed by members of the two communities. (Subsequently it turned out that only 3 had signed the document.) So the findings of the inquiry were not public. Only the summary of the accord was released, not the text. According to this accord, the Ghanta at the temple would not be used nor would the claim to the mazar be pressed.

TENSION MOUNTS

But soon, a group of muslims complained that 30-35 persons were crowding the temple room for group worship and demanded the removal of the ghanta. The more agitated ones threatened that they would start offering chaddars at the mazar if the accord was not strictly enforced. A piece of pig meat was found on Aug. 14 in the main mosque. According to official sources, such meat pieces were found in different mosques in the town on August 22, Sept. 2 and Sept. 4.

Sporadic killings started in the area. The Pesh Imam (prayer leader) of a mosque was killed in the last week of August. In retaliation, Ram Bhole, the pujari of the temple, was killed on Sept. 6. A Muslim home guard was stabbed to death on Sept. 8. Another Pesh Imam was killed also on Sept. 8.

On Sept. 11, the district administration decided to do what they should have done on August 20. The summary of the finding released to the press said: There was no mazar at the disputed place; the disputed area consisting of the piao, the three shops and the well were public property; there was no "public temple" over the shops or in any other part of the disputed area.

TEMPLE OPENED

On Sept. 12, the authorities sealed the place under section 144. The Hindu communalists took this as a challenge and gave a call for a bandh. The bandh went on for at least 3 days. The bar association filed a revision petition against the authorities' order in the court of the district judge. The petition was allowed and the seal was removed from the temple on Sept. 22. Mohanlal Kapur led a victory procession on Sept. 23 and was hailed as a Hindu hero.

On Sept. 23, 3 union ministers of state, Jaffer Sharief, Mohsina Kidwai, Khursheed Alam Khan, and 3 UP ministers, A R Nashtar, Ram Singh Khanna and Gulab Sehra visited Meerut and held open and closed door meetings.

Baqr Idd happened to be on Sept. 28. It was decided at a meeting on Sept. 25 in the mosque Gudri Bazar that Idd would not be celebrated with the usual enthusiasm as a protest against the highhandedness of police, particularly the PAC, against the Muslims. It was also decided that on that day, the Muslims would wear black badges against the removal of the

seal. The meeting was attended among others by Shah Nawaz Khan, a former union minister, Zakiuddin, Congress(I) MLA, and Mufti Abdul Khaliq, vice president of city Congress(I). Black flags were also hoisted on some Muslim houses. Hindus in retaliation started a campaign to hoist saffron colored flags in a big way. They also expressed open support for the PAC which they thought should not be removed or replaced by any other force.

The situation went out of control and all hell broke loose from Sept. 30 to October 2. On the night of Sept. 29, according to district officials, Muslims attacked Harijans and other Hindus in simultaneous moves in different localities; 4 houses belonging to Harijans were burnt. Other official accounts also blame only "Muslim miscreants" for the riots. Eye witnesses tell a totally different story.

According to Brij Rajkishore, CPI secretary, the Hindu communalists were in league with the PAC. The Hindu communalists would fire from housetops and then the PAC jawans would enter Muslim houses alleging that the Muslims had attacked. Many survivors of the PAC massacres told Engineer that their menfolk were dragged out of their houses and shot. Most of the houses in the locality have bullet holes.

FEROZE WORST AFFECTED

Worst affected was the Feroze building, which is a series of semi-pucca dwellings of poor Muslims. According to Pyare Lal, SP, and Mishra, ADM, the Muslims living in the building were attacking the police and the district officials from one side and the Hindus living in the neighboring areas from the other side with bricks and bombs. Onsite investigations suggest a totally different story. The location of the building and the topography of the area do not leave any scope for the credibility of the official accounts. Throwing of bombs and missiles seems very difficult from that building. No policeman was reported killed in the confrontation at Feroze building; no policeman appears to have suffered any bullet injuries either.

On the contrary, not a single house in this building, situated at Bhumain Ka Pul, escaped the wrath of the PAC. Iqbal, the only son of a doctor called Shabbir Hussain, was shot by the PAC jawans along with his cousin and the father was ordered to load the dead bodies on a truck and wipe the blood clean. The father has been arrested and is in jail. No fewer than 42 persons were killed on October 1 and 2 by the PAC jawans. According to Manzoor Ahmed, Congress(I) MLA, one of the tricks was to explode a bomb and when people came out to see what had happened, they were shot.

A delegation with K.D. Sharma of Meerut College, Harpal Singh, Nanak Chand College, Mansur Ahmed of Scientific Works Association and Mahabir Singh, advocate, went around the affected areas and strongly condemned the riots. They said that RSS and other communal elements in collusion with the district administration had let loose a reign of terror on poor and unprotected workers belonging to the minority community.

ROLE OF PRESS

The national press has published very sketchy reports of the riots which reflects the strong prejudice of the big press against the minorities. The local Hindi press of Meerut played havoc by publishing inflammatory reports against the minorities. They were acting as a mouthpiece of the RSS.

The minorities have praised the role of the CRP and BSF which were deployed after there were demonstrations demanding removal of the PAC. Why could not these forces be deployed from the beginning? Some senior police and district officers are blatantly hostile to Muslims. It is shocking that they have not been transferred despite orders supposed to have been given from the prime minister's office.

(Based on reports by Anees Chishti and Asghar Ali Engineer in Econ. & Pol. Weekly)



A BSF patrol in a Meerut lane. - India Today

Politics of Communal Riots

ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER

Recent studies of communal riots in different parts of India have suggested certain characteristic features of these riots. These are broadly: (i) Communal riots generally take place in a middle-sized towns. (ii) The proportion of Muslims in such towns happens to be high, usually more than 30%. (iii) A section of Muslims in such towns is generally well-to-do and tends to be a potential competitor to Hindu traders. (iv) The riots now tend to be well planned and last for several days or weeks; they are no longer spontaneous outbursts as used to be the case earlier. (v) The core issues, more often than not, happen to be of an economic or political nature whereas the spark is provided by some trivial incident. Another feature of communal riots is the progressively more prominent role played by anti-social elements who seek political legitimization and respectability through participation in riots. Increasing use of illegal weapons and other incendiary materials in a systematic way is also a pointer in the same direction.

In the Meerut riots during September-October, all these features were more or less present. It is a middle-sized town with a population of 500,000. The ratio of Hindus to Muslims is approximately 51:49 according to the district authorities. One sees locality after locality exclusively inhabited by Muslims. There are several localities where the Hindus and Muslims live together.

Muslims are mostly engaged in handloom work. They are generally weavers and some of them own their looms. The cloth produced by them is generally sold to the Hindu traders. These conservative traders finance the RSS and also the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). A large section of Muslims is also engaged in the manufacture of brass bands and scissors. A section of Muslims is quite prosperous although the majority is poor; the well-

to-do have political ambitions.

The riots were well planned and lasted for more than 4 weeks. The pattern of setting fires to the houses and stabbing showed special training and skills.

Another important dimension of the Meerut riots is the conscious attempt made to make Dalits fight Muslims. There are several reasons for this: (a) After the conversion of some Dalits to Islam at Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu, the VHP, which draws its cadres mainly from the RSS, is trying its best to woo them. It pays great attention to aggressive anti-Muslim propaganda among Dalits. In northern India in general and in UP in particular, such propaganda pays rich dividends and keeps alive tension between Muslims and Dalits. Before the Meerut riots, clashes between Muslims and Dalits had occurred in Delhi near Turkman Gate in late July. Such tensions keep Dalits away from Muslims and wreck efforts at unity between the two. (b) By using Dalits in the forefront to fight Muslims, the RSS can maintain the myth of neutrality and even pretend innocence in communal conflicts. (c) While promoting the myth of Hindu religious solidarity, this strategy helps to divide the have-nots.

According to Ms. Harpal Singh, a teacher in the Department of Education, Nanak Chand College, in Meerut, the caste Hindus had used members of Valmiki community (Bhangis or sweepers), who are extremely poor, to fight the Muslims. It was even rumored, she said, that the Valmiki were paid Rs 200 and a bottle of liquor for killing one Muslim. While there rumors may have been exaggerated, they are reflective of a new trend among upper caste Hindus. According to Singh, BJP's Mohanlal Kapur, the former MLA from Meerut, nowadays comes to Meerut from long distances to perform puja along with the Dalits.

(from Econ. & Pol. Weekly)

Tarkunde Beaten up by Madurai Police

Members of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) were lathicharged by Madurai police when they were about to take out a procession on October 31. Among those injured was Justice Tarkunde, the eminent jurist, who is also the president of the All-India PUCL. The procession was being organized at the culmination of a fortnight of activities against police atrocities sponsored by the PUCL at the all-India level.

PUCL had received permission for taking out a silent procession to condemn police excesses. Members of PUCL who were attending a two day conference at Madurai were scheduled to take part in the procession. When about 40 people had assembled at the starting point of the procession, more than 150 policemen arrived on the scene, ostensibly to regulate the procession. Hari, a freelance journalist took a photograph of the processionists and the placards they were holding. Some policemen objected to this and threatened to arrest him. Tarkunde intervened to point out that there was no law prohibiting the taking of photographs. But the Deputy Superintendent of Police ordered the policemen to seize the camera. At the same time, the police also started attacking the processionists. According to Tarkunde four were seriously injured. Tarkunde himself was injured at the knee-cap.

Tarkunde and ten others were pushed into a van and taken to the B4 police station where he was detained for more than three hours. Learning of his identity as a former judge and presently a supreme court lawyer, Tarkunde was told that he was not expected to be there. When he insisted on talking with the arrested persons, he was called out and forcibly pushed out. His spectacle was broken and his shirt torn.

Talking about the attack, Tarkunde said that it was a wanton attack by the police and their intention was perhaps to create terror in the minds of the people. No police officer can act like this and no one can be arrested without a warrant. The Madurai police seem to be worse than the others in the country, Tarkunde

said. He added that people would not be cowed down by such actions. All-India PUCL will initiate criminal and civil action against the police officers responsible for the lathicharge.

The incident, Tarkunde said only showed that there was lawlessness on the part of the police. It was the duty of the lawyers to see that policemen were brought within the purview of law. They must be made to realize their responsibilities to the people without which there could be no proper relationship between the police and the public. Even during the emergency when I had led such processions I was not beaten up or arrested. This is my first experience, Tarkunde said.

The attack by police on Tarkunde and other members of the PUCL has been widely condemned by various political and civil rights organizations. The issue was also raised in the parliament. In Madurai, lawyers boycotted the courts on November 4 and took out a silent procession of protest. In a press release they demanded that the state government take immediate and suitable action against the police personnel. Chief Minister Ramachandran while regretting the incident has asked the District Revenue Officer to conduct an enquiry. PUCL members and leaders of various political parties have questioned the enquiry at a non-judicial level. Calling the enquiry a farce, PUCL Organizing Secretary Kanabiran said that he did not expect real truth to come out of any administrative enquiry.

The PUCL members have been released on bail and the police are charging that they were armed with sticks and caused injuries to six policemen. The PUCL has stated that it will start legal proceedings against the police officials with a view to not merely punish the officials, but also to educate the general public as to the importance of civil rights as a non-partisan issue of concern to all democratically minded. Earlier in the two day conference at Madurai, the PUCL members discussed the importance of generating increased awareness of the civil rights in the rural areas.

Cabinet Reshuffles and Expansions

(continued from p.2)

sidents and to keep Solanki in line, a known and aggressive dissident, Mahipat Rai Mehta, was appointed PCC-I chief. Dissidents instead of being assuaged were emboldened and Solanki could not be kept in line in any case. Hence now to dampen dissidence, it is said, and to free Solanki, his nominee has now been made PCC-I chief. Dissidence is forecast to escalate further.

Fourth, each successive attempt of Mrs Gandhi to improve performance, to curb dissidence has only served to prove that she just can't. She is reduced to issuing directives that no one heeds. "Bring power supply to normal in 24 hours," PM's strong directive to DESU - DESU being the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking - and the undertaking does not so much as spare a yawn. "Implement the 20-point program" is PM's directive to the states, and so enthusiastic is the response of the states that the Planning Commission decides to suspend publication of reports about the implementation of the program. "Curb dissidence" is the PM's directive to partymen, that being the fourth on the subject, and the very next day dissidents troop to Delhi with yet another memorandum against their chief minister. What is more, Mrs Gandhi receives them, memorandum and all. Ultimately she is enraged enough at Solanki to drop him from the Congress working committee but even as she does so she feels compelled to assuage him by removing his detractor from the PCC-I headship and replacing him with a nominee of Solanki.

And it is in this weakened state that even her partymen now see Mrs Gandhi. Look at the way they mock her by first forcing her at every turn to nominate one chief minister after another and then paralysing whoever it is she nominates.

All this is to the good. For today Mrs Gandhi is not just the most visible symbol

of things that are wrong within the arena of politics as it is practiced in India today: she is the single most effective obstacle to setting them right.

For one thing, Mrs Gandhi finds these fellows useful on the whole. For another, the conduct you impugn - corruption, nonperformance, the assumption and exercise of arbitrary powers, etc. - reminds her of what she has herself been charged with. And for a third, the values you invoke to censure the Mishras, the institutions you want to resuscitate by removing them are the ones that she has little use for in any case.

The position thus far has therefore been as follows: On the one hand, because of the pre-eminent position Mrs Gandhi has occupied on the political stage no reform could be carried through without, to use the currently fashionable words, her blessings. On the other, Mrs Gandhi has not been interested in any reform.

The consequences of this stalemate have been disastrous. Today the state is not able to perform even its elementary function of protecting the lives of its citizens. As an exercise find out how many women have been burnt to death in Delhi itself since January 1980 and how many of their murderers have been brought to book by the state. Similarly, take crimes against Harijans. In UP, there have been four major killings in which 52 Harijans have been burnt or gunned to death. Has the state been able to ensure one, just one, conviction? No. In July last year 336 died by consuming contaminated liquor in Bangalore. Has anyone - just one - been brought to book for the deaths? No, not one.

It isn't just that the state can no longer prevent or solve crimes. Crimes of the state now proceed unchecked. In UP alone since her government came to



Members of the Madurai Bar Association taking out a silent procession in protest against the lathi-charge on the PUCL processionists.

from Indian Express

power, 3015 persons have been killed in "encounters" almost none of which, every thoughtful observer agrees, has ever taken place. In Bihar, two years have passed since the Bhagalpur blindings were brought to light, not one conviction thus far. And the reason for this is not that the evidence is insufficient, but that the state has not been interested in prosecuting the guilty.

And who personifies the state in Bihar? Jagannath Mishra. And who is his singular prop? Mrs Gandhi.

Mrs Gandhi's continuance therefore has one result and one alone: it perpetuates, indeed promotes, total unaccountability at all levels in the state apparatus and in all parts of the country.

We can scarcely survive that. Hence it is that while the proposition that is often advanced - the moment Mrs Gandhi goes there will be chaos - may or may not be true, its corollary certainly is: the longer that moment is delayed, the greater will be the chaos.

Over 17,000 Doctors Unemployed

According to the deputy minister for health and family welfare, Kumud Joshi, there are over 17,000 registered unemployed graduate and postgraduate doctors in India. According to press reports, the actual number is over 30,000.

The minister added that public health was under the state governments, but steps were being taken to create job opportunities for doctors in the 6th five year plan. Joshi also commented that the government was taking actions to discourage doctors from migrating to foreign countries. According to her, restrictions were being placed on graduate medicos for going abroad for higher studies and training. Joshi added that the government was following the policy of giving advance increments to specially qualified candidates on the recommendations of state and central public service commissions.

Afghan Rebels Disrupt Soviet Gas Project

V. KUMAR

Sabotage by Afghan guerrilla fighters is apparently disrupting Soviet plans for vigorous growth of Afghanistan's natural gas production and associated petrochemical industries. Afghan gas production, most of it under contract for export to the USSR, has been considerably less than the 4 billion cubic meters per year originally targeted by Moscow for 1981.

Production of urea (chemical fertilizer) and its exports to the Soviet Union from an Afghan plant built by the Russians has also lagged because of guerrilla activity in northern Afghanistan.

Although the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Trade has not released official figures on volumes of natural gas traded since 1976, indications from industry sources are that, in 1981, the Soviets received only 2.5-3 billion cu.m of Afghan gas. This is about the same as the 2.85 billion cu.m exported by Afghanistan to the USSR in 1975.

Sharply higher gas exports were anticipated in 1980 and 1981 when Russian personnel had succeeded in bringing the large Djar-Kuduk field (see map) into production in 1980. The field's flow, estimated at 1.5-2 billion cu.m/year, was expected to boost Afghan gas production to nearly 4 billion cu.m/year. Anticipating larger production and exports, Russian technicians constructed a second loop on the pipeline from Shibarghan to the Soviet border.

The Soviet press has conceded that the pipelines to the USSR as well as a spur pipeline to the fertilizer plant and power station at Mazar-i-Sharif have been repeatedly blown up by Afghan guerrillas. The Russians also concede that from March 1980 to March 1981 Afghan gas production only increased 7%, even though Djar-Kuduk has been on production since May 1980.

Although Soviet officials claim that Afghan gas fields are "doing well," trade figures published by the USSR disclose

that total imports to the Soviet Union from Afghanistan fell 10% in 1981. Gas accounted for about 61% of Afghan exports to the Soviet Union last year and contributed more than 35% of all Afghanistan's budget resources.

Guerrilla actions are also believed responsible for delays in developing Afghanistan's small oil fields and in building a 10,000 b/d refinery.

EXILES CHARGE EXPLOITATION

Afghan exiles claim that the USSR is unfairly exploiting Afghanistan's gas resources.

The Association for Information and Documentation, a news service established by Afghan exiles in France and Pakistan, has asserted that the Soviet Union, the only foreign buyer of Afghan gas, no longer actually pays for the fuel. Their newsletter says:

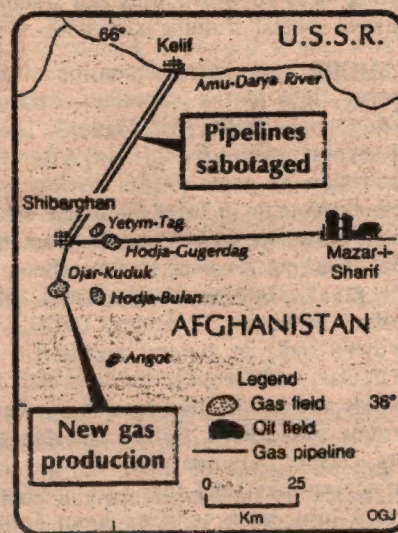
"Since the Soviet occupation, Russia deducts the estimated value of the gas from the increasingly heavy debt owed by the current Afghan government to the USSR. This debt essentially represents the cost of the Soviet Union's military occupation of Afghanistan, which is charged to the Kabul government.

"Moreover, no one except the Soviet technicians really knows how much Afghan gas is exported to the USSR. Soviet personnel have sole access to gas meters and Afghan officials are barred from them."

Moscow has claimed that its assistance to the Afghan gas industry has created new economic development for the country. According to a brochure put out by the Novosti Press Agency, "Afghanistan's gas industry takes a special place in the economic ties between our countries. ... Gas has become one of the most profitable Afghan exports, providing an abundant means of liquidating debts."

The Russians contend that far from exploiting Afghanistan, the USSR bases

Afghan action



the price of Afghan gas on prevailing western Europe prices.

GAS PRICES

According to official Soviet figures, the USSR bought nearly \$262 million (US) of Afghan gas in 1981 compared with \$182 million in 1980. Much of the increase is attributed to a 30% price hike in March 1981.

Industry sources believe that the Soviets paid Afghanistan close to \$3/Mcf (1000 cu.ft) for gas in 1981, \$2.35/Mcf in 1980 and \$0.77/Mcf in 1979. The 1981 price compares favorably with the \$2.82/Mcf that the Soviet Union charged other Eastern European countries for Soviet gas in 1981. But it is considerably less than the \$4.21/Mcf that Western European countries paid for Soviet gas last year.

Meanwhile, Iran has been unable to reach agreement on prices with the Soviet Union for Iranian gas, preventing resumption of gas deliveries. In 1980, Iran asked Russia to pay \$3.63/Mcf instead of the existing price of \$0.77/Mcf. Moscow apparently offered Iran \$2.35 but the deal was rejected.

(based on reporting in the Oil & Gas Journal)

Brezhnev's Era Marks Soviet Rise as an Aggressive Power

R.N.RAJU

Much has been written about in the last few weeks following Brezhnev's death, with commentators portraying the virtues of the late Soviet leader. Indian papers have seen him as the architect of strong Indo-Soviet relations. Those interested in the international arena have painted him as a lover of peace who offered the best hopes of compromising with the other superpower, the United States. Even in the US, many commentators thought of Brezhnev as one who wished to see his name inscribed in history as having sought and achieved control of armaments, particularly the nuclear weapons.

While the above comments reflect some aspects of the life and work of the Soviet leader who controlled all important positions of power in his own hands, they do not summarize the essence of the Brezhnev era. If one carefully reviews the eighteen years of Brezhnev rule, a number of important facets appear obvious. The Soviet Union used its military power to keep under control dissenting members of its own power bloc. The Soviet Union became the major supplier of arms and armaments to a number of poor, developing countries while her economic assistance to these countries was minimal. Soviet Union became a strong nuclear power comparable to the United States, possibly overtaking it. Soviet Union employed its armed forces to forcibly occupy sovereign non-aligned countries and supported its client countries to do the same. And Soviet Union found itself as the target of condemnation in the United Nations and in the Non-Aligned Movement where it used to automatically enjoy the support of various anti-colonial, developing countries. In short, Soviet Union has emerged during the Brezhnev era as a superpower, with aggressive intentions and actions much too familiar to

the world in general, and to the developing countries in particular.

Brezhnev, who assumed the leadership of the Soviet Communist party in 1964, had the responsibility for the Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia four years later. This action signified to the outside world the nature of changes that the Soviet Union had undergone and its readiness to resort to armed intervention in order to keep intact its leadership over the bloc. More recently, the Brezhnev leadership sought to play a very similar role in Poland, making it evident to the Polish people that the only Polish government that the Soviets would permit to exist is a government subservient to Moscow's interests.

The Soviet Union under Brezhnev signed a number of bilateral treaties of friendship with the less developed countries. Egypt, Somalia, India, Ethiopia, Yemen, Vietnam, Cuba were some of the countries that entered into treaties with the USSR. Overnight, the Soviet Union became a major supplier of arms to Egypt and Somalia. At the same time, the economic assistance for development to both of these countries was virtually negligible. In both of these countries, Soviet attempts to gain control over the internal centers of power resulted in the expulsion of the Soviets and the termination of the treaties entered into. In case of India, the bilateral treaty was agreed upon at a time shortly preceding India's conflict with Pakistan that resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. Ever since, the Soviet Union has emerged as a dominant arms supplier of India as well as a principal trade partner. In the case of Ethiopia, the USSR resorted to the most phenomenal arms shipment ever, in a short time period. The USSR provided military advisors as well. With this, Ethiopia launched a major conflict with Somalia across its border. More importantly, the Ethiopian junta



launched a decimating armed suppression against people of Eritrea and Tigre within the territory of Ethiopia. Soviet military advisors were found to be directly involved on the side of the junta and against the nationalist forces.

The Soviet relations with Cuba and Viet Nam have had even a stronger impact. Cuba began to send its armed forces to Southern Africa where it was employed to fuel the conflict among nationalist organizations and to bring to power organizations which show a willingness to support the global political interests of the Soviet Union. The Cuban forces continue to remain there even today. The agreement with Vietnam had an even more important effect. It provided the necessary political and strategic support to Viet Nam in its military intervention and continuing occupation of Kampuchea and the Vietnamization of both Laos and occupied Kampuchea.

Over the last two decades, the USSR has emerged as a major military power with superiority in the conventional weapons over the United States. When

Indo-Pak Joint Commission to be Set Up

India and Pakistan have agreed to the establishment of an Indo-Pak Joint Commission. The modalities and formalities in this regard will be discussed and finalized by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries. The agreement to set up the Commission was a major outcome of the talks held between President Zia Ul Huq of Pakistan and Prime Minister Gandhi, When President Zia made a short stop in New Delhi.

In addition to the agreement on the Joint Commission, the two heads of government also decided that the Foreign Secretaries should consider the Pakistani draft of a Non-aggression Pact and the Indian draft of a Treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation. The two Foreign Secretaries are to meet in Delhi next month.

The two leaders have also agreed to meet during the Non-Aligned Summit meeting in Delhi in March next year to continue their discussions and to review the progress in the official level talks.

The Joint Commission is essentially thought of as a forum for developing economic cooperation between the two countries. No political tasks are given to the commission. A similar Commission exists between India and Bangladesh. Although the agreement on the Commission was not a major breakthrough in the bilateral relations between the two countries, the very fact that a Pakistani Head of Government was visiting India, in itself was very significant.

Before departing from Delhi for Bangkok, President Zia said at the airport, that we had an excellent meeting and God willing, it will pave the way for better Indo-Pak relations. He seemed very satisfied with the outcome of his discussions with Prime Minister Gandhi. Zia said 'We had a heart to heart exchange of views which would pave the way for better cooperation. We are looking forward to very good, close and happy relations between India and Pakistan.'

the nuclear weapon strength of these two superpowers are compared, the USSR has at least gained parity and possibly holds an edge of superiority over the United States. This major development in weapons and armaments did not occur under the Brezhnev rule without an accompanying cost in terms of serious crisis in the internal economy. The shortage in agricultural production has been disastrous, making the Soviet Union the largest importer of grains.

The emergence of the military might of Soviet Union under Brezhnev also had some unfavorable political consequences. For many years, during the fifties and early sixties, many developing countries viewed Soviet Union as an ally to depend upon especially in the face of the US aggression worldwide. This position has undergone a dramatic change in the last ten years. Ever since the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the Soviet backed Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, the Soviet Union has become very isolated in all the world forums. Both in the United Nations and among the Non-Aligned Movement, the Soviet Union is continually being forced to defend its illegal aggression and support for aggression. In spite of the attempts made by Cuba and Viet Nam, the Non-Aligned Movement has maintained its identity equidistant from those of the two superpowers. The political credibility of the USSR under Brezhnev had been very low within this Movement.

Overall, the USSR which emerged as a relatively strong power under Khrushchev, grew to become a superpower, whose aggressive ambitions, under the Brezhnev regime, clearly became very visible. Especially, the last five years of Brezhnev's rule, was associated with the widespread identification of USSR as a threat to national sovereignty of countries and global peace.

Women's Varsity Proposed for Tamil Nadu

An expert committee has recommended the establishment of a women's university in Tamil Nadu which will be different from other universities in terms of its special mission. Both the state and the central governments have to approve the proposal, before the university could be set up at Kodaikanal as suggested by the committee. The expert committee was headed by the well known educationist Malcolm S. Adiseshia.

The committee has suggested that the university be unitary and essentially residential. It is to perform three functions: (1) monitoring education from the primary to the university stage, suggesting removal of discrimination against women whenever detected, (2) consultative function which involves assistance to other educational institutions, and (3) research function, especially in areas where women's studies are not undertaken on account of not falling within the normal areas of university statutes.

The proposed capital expenditure for the university is around Rs 60 million. The recurring expenditure, when the university is fully established, is to be between Rs 5 and 6 million. To start with, it is proposed that 200 women students are to be admitted.

The expert committee submitted its report both in Tamil and English to the Tamil Nadu government. Adiseshia said that the drawing up of the report was inspired by the poet Bharatiar's vision of women's education. The theme of the report itself was "Towards equal status for women." If implemented, the establishment of this university would be a positive step taken in the state towards education of women.



23 Indian Women Fired by Toronto Pizza Factory

Our Toronto Correspondent

Twenty-three East Indian women working on the afternoon shift at Canadian Pizza Crust at 2345 Stanfield Road in Mississauga were locked out on October 7 for requesting wage increases promised them many weeks earlier.

The increase of \$.30 an hour had already been granted the day workers six weeks prior to October 7. The women returned the following day and were refused work. They were given no notice of layoff nor were they given severance pay. In addition to this they were also subjected to racial remarks such as — "we don't want any stupid Indians." Complaints to the Human Rights Commission and the Labour Relations Board have brought no redress. Community organizations and workers are outraged at this blatant act of discrimination and have called for immediate action.

The women have worked at the plant for many years. Management has commended them in the past but continued to pay them minimal wages. Moreover, the working conditions at the plant are inadequate judging from stories of workers having blistered hands due to lack of proper protection, insufficient and erratic resting periods, etc. Since then, a group of individuals has been working with the women and their families. They have formed themselves into an ad-hoc committee: Support Committee for Indian Women Workers. The Support Committee, has been trying various channels by which to investigate the case and monitoring the Human Rights Commission in its manner of dealing with the issue. Almost a month has gone by and the investigation has also been informed that a resolution of such a case may take 1 to 3 years.

The Support Committee is working together to achieve primarily one objec-

PRABHASH JOSHI

Maniben is landless. Her village Devdholera, some 45 km southwest of Ahmedabad in Dholka taluka, has hardly any agriculture. The soil is saline and the rainfall scanty. Even in a non-drought year the large army of landless labor cannot be employed for more than four months. Then men get preference over women like Maniben who has not yet completely recovered from the tuberculosis she contracted a few years ago. Earlier when she did not get work in the fields she went around singing and begging for a living. With her elder son working as a casual laborer in Ahmedabad and the younger son neither working nor studying, Maniben has been left alone to fend for herself.

Now Maniben has a buffalo she bought under Jaago (awaken), a rural project run by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad. She has paid the SEWA loan and is a vocal member of the Devdholera Dudh Sahkari Mandali, a milk cooperative owned and run by the women of the village.

Her buffalo did not get enough green fodder even during the monsoon and therefore it yields hardly two to three liters of milk a day. "It is not enough, I know. But from where will I get the money" to feed the buffalo, she asked. The buffalo gives her on an average Rs 150 a month.

MEN RESENTFUL

"Even the sarpanch is annoyed at what SEWA has given to the women in this village. The men resent the mood of defiance and the sense of independence the women have been showing in recent years. They do not say so in as many words, but they do suspect us of spoiling their women," said Ela Bhatt, general secretary of SEWA, as we reached another hut at the end of Devdholera.

THE MANDALI

Kankuben, the president of the women's milk cooperative, came out limping and insisted on spreading cots for us to sit on in the veranda. The chubby little widow Kankuben had her hands tattooed in

the fashion of Koli-Patel women. She is illiterate and, unlike Maniben, needed some goading to talk about her mandali. There are 64 members. Each has one share but not more than one or two heads of cattle. A woman pays Rs 25 to buy a share, one rupee as admission fee and Rs 5 for SEWA membership. SEWA gives them Rs 2,000 as loan at 4% interest to buy a buffalo. (But of course you cannot get a buffalo for Rs 2,000). The mandali sells about 350 liters of milk a day to the Sardar Dairy which in turn gives the milk to the Ahmedabad Dairy run by the government. The price varies between Rs 1.60 and Rs 2.80 a liter, depending on the fat content.

Problems? "Yes, in the beginning, the rich farmers tried to capture our mandali. I fought back. Private merchants also come to corner our milk. They give advances and tried to bribe our members in various other ways. But they buy the milk cheap here and sell at exorbitant prices in Ahmedabad. We know all this business. SEWA has made us strong," Kankuben got up limping.

I picked up Bhikabhai's iron-capped lathi and took his beautifully woven dupatta. A professional cattle breeder from the Bharwad community, he was interjecting with bits of information about what facilities the milk traders give while Kankuben was talking to us. He obviously knew better how to rear cattle and get better value by making it yield more milk. He was dissatisfied with the working of the mandali; in his opinion a bunch of women amateurs at dairying, although his wife has a share in it.

"Everywhere the women look after the cattle," said Ela Bhatt as we trekked back to the SEWA center. She added: "They are the real dairy workers. But they neither get the money nor they control the business. The professionals corner the benefits. Therefore, in all the seven villages SEWA is working, we have formed women's milk cooperatives. These may not be running as efficiently as the others work, but whatever the income, it comes to the women and it gives them strength to fight the traders and the monopolies."

CRECHE

Devdholera center, the nucleus of SEWA's rural income generation program, was in full swing. Boys learning carpentry. Women from all castes doing bamboo work and singing "Blood has one color, whether it is of the rich or the poor," and the tailoring class. Outside under another shade, Sharifa was singing a Gujarati folk song and getting every line repeated by the kids attending the creche.

She is a Muslim girl, daughter of the village midwife, a dark beauty. She is married to a man in village Barel in far-off Ajmer district in Rajasthan. She studied up to the fifth class, got some training and has been running the creche for about a year, getting Rs 150 a month.

Sharifa goes out every morning at 7, collects the kids, makes them bathe and pray. The children are given milk and rice for breakfast. Then they play, get kichdi and milk for lunch, listen to stories, sing songs. Their mothers come around this time from fields to take them home. Sharifa looks after 40 children, five of them in the Gho-diaghar — a sort of cradle room.

Under the banyan tree, Bhikabhai was talking to Navalbhai Shah, a veteran Gandhian worker. "You see, most of the milk comes from the Bharwads," said Navalbhai. "The 64 women of the cooperative contribute just about 100 liters. Their cattle are so famished. They do not have the means to make the cooperative give a living to the women. Anything that cannot be made viable will not work."

Very true. Navalbhai has made all his projects viable. But can mere economic viability give strength to a Maniben to fight the advances of the man across the street? Can it put such down-to-earth determination in Kankuben to make the mandali stand up and be counted? And can it help Sharifa to weave her dreams? SEWA's help to the women should be seen in social and psychological terms. SEWA is trying to give strength to women, the weakest and the most oppressed section of our society not only to sustain themselves, but to stand up and speak.

(from the Indian Express)

Women's Cooperative Program at Montreal

Our Montreal Correspondent

South Asia Community Center (SACC), an organization working to help South Asian women in Montreal was recently promised an initial funding of \$21,000 by Canada Community Development Project for a period of 27 weeks for

starting their proposed women's cooperative in Montreal.

The Women's Cooperative is a major project of SACC to meet the needs of South Asian women. The basic philosophy of the cooperative, according to a spokesperson of SACC, is to confer a sense of pride in South Asian women, break their isolation and provide avenues for their creative talents in fields of handiwork and other productive abilities.

The cooperative, a non-profit organization, is expected to start a shop-cum-restaurant to be run by women. South Asian women of the area will be encouraged to join the cooperative which will distribute and sell any products these women can make at home. According to SACC representatives, many South Asian women possess a wealth of talent but are unable to find jobs and have to stay home because of children; many of them do not find any merit in their abilities because there is no market for what they produce nor is there any encouragement for their talents. The cooperative will also run a job search program.

During the one year since SACC has been functioning in Montreal, the organization has been able to enlarge its contacts, has acquired an office through the courtesy of Montreal Metropolitan, a social welfare organization, and now runs a regular telephone service for needy women.

SACC raises funds to support its activities by organizing other activities. Recently they produced a greeting card and sold several hundred copies. A Bazaar is planned for November 27. Many individuals have contributed items for sale at the Bazaar.



A card designed by Sunita Mukherjee for the South Asia Community Center, Montreal.

This and two other cards can be bought in packets of 10 (assorted cards) for \$5. Send orders to SACC, PO Box 882, Station H, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3G 2M8. Add \$1 postage for every packet. PRE-PAID ORDERS ONLY. Checks payable to South Asia Community Center.

Bill for Indians Abroad to Vote

Ram Jethmalani, belonging to Bharatiya Janata Party, introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha on Oct. 8 that would allow Indian citizens living abroad to vote. Jethmalani, who is a constitutional lawyer, argued that this would help strengthen the emotional bonds between them and India and deal with their grievance that they have been disenfranchised.

Among the people of Indian origin living in 137 countries abroad, about 2.5 million were Indian citizens in 1980. Presently, Indian diplomats and other government employees posted abroad and their spouses are allowed to vote.

The bill is not supported by Congress(I). Without its support, the bill is expected to meet the fate of several private bills introduced in every session that are either killed in early stages or lapse with the term of the House without being seriously considered.

China's Hybrid Rice May Help Increase Productions in India

VIJAYANT N. CHAKRAVORTY

Chinese farmers are increasingly using a new variety of rice that can bump up yields 20 to 30% higher than even the high-yielding varieties developed by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines. These new Chinese hybrid varieties are being hailed as miracle varieties of the 1980s.

IRRI initiated a research program on hybrid rice in the early 1970s but it soon abandoned hopes of any major breakthrough in this field. In 1977, however, Chinese scientists startled the world when they reported that two million hectares of their rice farms were under hybrid rice. Sown over 16.7 million hectares in the last five years, the Chinese have reaped an extra 13 million tons of grain — an increase of almost 0.8 ton per hectare sown.

The new rice of China is now a subject of considerable interest across the world. It has already been introduced to several countries in Asia and West Asia and in 1981 it became the first Chinese crop-breeding technology to be transferred to the US.

An agreement has been reached between IRRI and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences for exchange of knowhow on hybrid rice. Dr S.S. Virmani, Indian plant breeder at IRRI argues that Punjab, Haryana, Western UP, Bihar and Tamil Nadu, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, South Korea and the Philippines

have immense potentialities for growing hybrid rice. Many major Asian rice-growing countries have started exploring ways to undertake hybrid rice research programs.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has also initiated a hybrid rice program at six research centers. Basic seed material is being supplied by China under the China-IRRI collaboration.

Hybrid rice may give agricultural scientists the breather they need at the moment in pushing up crop yields. As more and more natural rice strains are being exploited, seeds with good genetic qualities are becoming rare for conventional rice-breeding programs, says Dr Virmani.

INCREASE INEQUALITY?

Ironically, this miracle rice, developed and bred in the egalitarian social conditions of China, could worsen agrarian inequalities in already unequal societies of Asia and elsewhere. This is because hybrid rice seeds have to be purchased for every sowing. The grains of the hybrid plant are infertile though plant growth and yield are vigorous. Hybridization essentially means crossbreeding through artificial means in self-pollinating plants.

Many millions of poor farmers in Asia do not purchase seeds or for that matter any other agricultural input for every agricultural season. Some of this year's grain is kept as next year's seed.

Because rich farmers tend to use agricultural inputs more than poorer ones, it is much more likely that hybrid rice seeds too will be used mainly by richer farmers. This could increase the gap between the rich and poor farmers further.

Hybrid rice varieties still have to be tested in rainfed conditions. Most of the hybrid rice in China is grown in irrigated fields. A large number of rice farms in the developing world are rainfed, and they have benefited little from IRRI's miracle semi-dwarf varieties which have highly sensitive water requirements.

SCOPE FOR MULTINATIONALS

Widespread use of hybrid varieties also provides commercial seed companies an opportunity to enter the seed market in a big way. The process of hybridization is a complex one and can be undertaken only by qualified agriculturists. Moreover, as using hybrid seeds means going to the market to purchase them every time the farmer becomes dependent on seed companies for the supply.

Recent attempts by multinational pesticide companies to buy up seed companies in the US, where the hybrid corn seed market is a large one, and the trend towards patenting of new seeds, has created fears that a few multinational companies may come to control all agricultural inputs.

(Centre for Science & Environment)

Environment and Development

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT IN INDIA

G. ANAND

Environmental problems in developing countries are even more acute than in the industrialized west. This is the conclusion drawn by a recent publication, *The State of India's Environment — 1982*, brought out by a group of voluntary agencies and individuals and edited at the Centre for Science and Environment. Three areas are identified in the report as being most critical: deforestation, water pollution and land management.

The report, supported by extensive data, leads to a uniformly gloomy picture of the Indian situation.

The report does an extensive study of firewood which is the most important energy source, providing half the cooking energy in cities and 70% in villages. The enormous dependence on firewood has resulted in demand far outstripping supply. A study of Madhya Pradesh shows, for instance, that 30 out of 45 districts are already suffering from a firewood famine. In order to meet their firewood needs, women and children spend a large part of their time traveling long distances to collect fuel. In village Dwing, in the high Garhwal region of the Himalayas in U.P., women walk at least 10 km three out of four days for an average seven hours per day to bring back 25 kg of wood for each headload. An extreme example of such difficulties is in Vajehad village in Gujarat where women spend six to nine hours every day collecting water and firewood out of a total working day of 14 to 15 hours. Such examples are enormous. It seems that many millions of rural women in India are caught in a vicious circle: they eat food to get human energy and then spend all of this energy in producing food and collecting the energy needed to cook it.

The impact of the firewood crisis is harsher on the landless peasants. With declining firewood resources, farmers with large numbers of cattle have set up biogas plants and have started collecting their crop residues for use as fuel. Many of the landless who depended on the collection and sale of crop residues and dung cakes now find their livelihood taken away from them.

(continued on p.11)

Over 10,000 Indian Students in US

According to the statistics provided by the Institute of International Education, there were 11,250 Indian students studying at American universities during the 1981-82 academic year. This put India 7th on the list of countries from where students come to the US for study. Iran was first in the list with 35,860. It was followed by Taiwan, Nigeria, Canada, Japan and Venezuela.

The number of Indian students was up from the 1980-81 figure of 9250. In 1979-80, 76% of Indian students studying here were in graduate programs. Over 50% were in technical fields, with 31% in engineering and 21% in business and management, 16% in natural and life sciences, and 3% in medicine.

The number of Indians coming here for studies has grown gradually from 1357 in 1949-50 to 6813 in 1964-65. There was a larger growth till 1969-70 when there were 11,327 Indian students. Since then, the number has remained steady.

The Europeans' ethnocentric bias even led them to introduce deliberate distortions in their accounts. For instance, the statement of Dr. Helenus Scott on wootz steel that it appears to admit of a harder temper than anything "we are acquainted with" was altered to "anything known in that part of India" by the editors of the *Philosophical Transactions of the British Royal Societies* (Vol. 85, p. 322).

Aspects of Indian Technology: Industry I

Arpad Singh

Technology discussed here mainly relates to iron and steel and, like previous articles in the series, is based on accounts given by Britishers in several of their writings. Some other aspects of Indian technology will be taken up in the next issue. A lack of space may not permit inclusion of many other aspects. But the accounts presented do indicate the widespread prevalence of an extremely efficient, sophisticated, simple and decentralist technology.

The process of making steel in India in the earlier times was unique and it had evolved over a period of time. The quality of steel, which was called "wootz," was very high and it evoked considerable scientific and technical interest in Britain in the late eighteenth century. In 1794, Dr. Helenus Scott sent a sample of wootz to Sir J. Banks, President of the British Royal Society with the following note: "It (wootz) appears to admit of a harder temper than anything we are acquainted with. I should be happy to have your opinion of its quality and composition. It is employed here (India) for covering that part of gun locks which the flint strikes, for cutting iron on a lathe, for chisels for cutting stone, for files and saws and for every purpose where excessive hardness is required."

The sample went through a thorough examination and analysis by several experts. It was found in general to match the best steel then available in Britain, and according to one user (Stoodart who many years later assisted Faraday in preparing and investigating a large number of steel alloys), "it promises to be of importance to the manufacturers" of Britain. He found it "excellently adapted for the purpose of fine cutlery, and particularly for all edge instruments used for surgical purposes." After its being sent as a sample in 1794 and its examination and analysis in late 1794 and early 1795, it began to be much in demand, and some 18 years later the aforementioned user of steel stated, "I have at this time a liberal supply of wootz, and I intend to use it for many purposes. If a better steel is offered to me, I will gladly attend to it, but the steel of India is decidedly the best I have yet met with."

One of the earliest accounts of Indian iron works was published by Dr. Benjamin

Heyne in 1795. Apart from a short description of the mines, smelting furnaces, etc., Heyne's article also indicates how, under the British administration, the number of smelting furnaces was on the decline. Heyne notes that in the village of Ramanakapettah "before the famine, there were besides 40 smelting furnaces, a great number of silver and copper smiths ... who were in a state of affluence." The reference is to the famine of 1790-2 which reduced the population of the Noozed zamindari from around 100,000 in 1786 to around 58,000 in 1793. The number of furnaces had come down to 10 in 1795.

The papers, "The Mode of Manufacturing Iron in Calcutta, India" by Major James Franklin F.R.S, MRAS (around 1829), and "Manufacture of Bar Iron in Southern India," by Captain J. Campbell, are detailed reports of the iron mines in India and the Indian method of manufacturing iron. Campbell notes: "Because the English mode of manufacturing iron has been found to be the most profitable in England, it has been supposed that a similar process could alone answer in India. This process has also been styled 'scientific', but the fact is that the principles of the mode of operation are still totally unknown. ... Such being the state of our present knowledge of the subject, it may be doubted if a careful examination of the principles of the long established, cheap and simple mode of manufacture of the natives of India, might not lead to improvements and modifications, which would be found to answer better, than the operose methods of the English manufacture, which require much capital, costly building, and a considerable trade to make them profitable."

What comes out very clearly from these articles is the extreme simplicity and, at the same time, the sophistication of Indian smelting furnace, the various implements and accessories used, and in fact the whole iron and steel making process itself. Franklin has the following to say: "Their smelting furnaces, though rude in appearance, are nevertheless very exact in their interior proportions, and it has often surprised me to see men who are unquestionably ignorant of their principles, construct them with precision, in so simple a manner... All this serves to show that the original plan of the singular

furnace must have been the work of advanced intelligence, and that its geometrical proportions have been preserved by simple measures..." (hands and fingers were used as standards of measurement).

In conclusion he says, "the Indian forge is economical to operate as compared to that of ours; it requires but little outlay; it is portable; may be transported from place to place wherever it is needed—near the ore and fuel..."

A cursory examination of the data presented in these two articles also seems to indicate that the proportion of iron recovered from the ore and the amount of charcoal fired to produce a given quantity of crude iron in central India is comparable to the respective ratios pertaining to the manufacture of iron and steel in Sweden etc. An estimate of the total steel production in the country also can be obtained from the data provided in these papers. There were around ten thousand iron and steel furnaces in the later part of the eighteenth century. On the assumption of 35-40 weeks per year operation of these furnaces, the production of iron per furnace may be estimated at twenty tons annually which in total meant 200,000 tons per year.

However, at the same time a negative opinion was prevailing too. When wootz was sent to Britain in 1794 for examination and analysis, many ascribed its high qualities to the quality of the ore from which it came and these qualities were considered to have little to do with the techniques and processes employed by the Indian manufacturers. This view was revised only some thirty years later, when in 1825 a British manufacturer took out a patent on a method similar to the Indian method of making steel.

According to J.M. Heath, founder of the Indian Iron and Steel Company, and later prominently connected with the development of steel making in Sheffield, the Indian process was derived from the early 19th century British discoveries. He concluded this by denying that the Indian producer had any theory of his operations. He felt it to be impossible "that the process was discovered by any scientific induction for the theory of it can only be explained by the lights of modern chemistry," which according to him did not exist in India.

Bonded Labor in Haryana Mines

Even before the Supreme Court has sorted out the problem of bonded labor in the Faridabad district of Haryana, it was presented with a case in still another district in the same state. Investigation by the court led to the release of 185 bonded laborers.

Forty persons in Pichopa in Bhiwani district wrote to the court: "We are all Adivasi Bhils. We are given Rs 3-5 a day. Drinking water is supplied once in 3 to 4 days. Our huts are worse than those used for keeping animals. ... We want to go away but our master and his goons tell us that we cannot leave unless we pay back their loan which is Rs 2000 to Rs 8000 per family. Dharma Pal Thekedar enters our huts and molests our young daughters and also beats them up. Please save us."

Swami Agnivesh forwarded the letter to the court. He also gave another list of 44 bonded laborers in Bilawal mines and quarries in the same district.

When Agnivesh and his coworkers reached the mines, they saw tribals of Barmer and Jalaur and Harijans of Maharashtra living in wretched hutments, in tattered clothes, with bruises on their

bodies and with no drinking water for days.

The mines, hidden in the Aravalli hills, were pointed out by a woman who had escaped from the place with her children after five years of misery.

The state government has denied on oath the existence of bonded labor in its mines. It has also stated it has vigilance committees in every district to investigate, release and rehabilitate bonded laborers.

Gobinda Mukhoty, counsel for the Bandhua Mukti Morcha, told the court that despite these declarations, more and more instances were turning up.

A bench headed by Justice P.N. Bhagwati The commissioners found 185 bonded laborers and freed them.

As of Sept. 30, the laborers were settled in transit camps near Dadri. Some interim steps have been taken like temporary jobs at public works, food rations and police protection from former owners' goondas. But there have been no long-term steps to rehabilitate the laborers and protect them from slipping back into bondage.

Environment

(continued from p.10)

Analysis of urban energy use is quite revealing. According to available statistics, nearly three quarters of firewood and about half of the dung used in urban India are purchased. In recent years, firewood prices have inflated rapidly and in many cities they have nearly doubled in the last six years. Thus in cities, poor families spend a large portion of their income (15-25%) on meeting energy needs. Considering that poor families ought to spend as much as 80-90% of their income on food, rising fuel prices will lead to reduced food intake. Cooking energy shortage will not only create serious nutritional problems but may also lead to increased incidence of various diseases. The FAO document, "Agriculture: Towards 2000," points out that many poor families will not be able to cook their food adequately leading to a greater incidence of parasites.

Contrary to popular belief, the report argues that the decline of forest resources is not wholly the result of the firewood demand of the poor. In a study of Pura village by the Indian Institute of Science, it was discovered that as much as 96% of the firewood used by energy gathering families was in the form of twigs and branches. In contrast, rich households depend on logs and account for 19% of the firewood consumed in Pura. Also, tree felling for commercial timber, clearing of land for agricultural purposes, construction of development projects like dams and urban growth, is probably the biggest cause of deforestation.

The report suggests that the Indian government should have an integrated cooking energy policy, if it wants to meet the basic needs of the population without causing wholesale environmental destruction.

Naxalite Activity in Bastar

Sreekant Khandekar

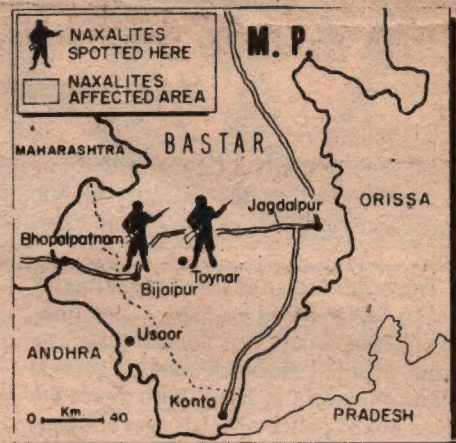
The state government of Madhya Pradesh recently announced a battalion of the Special Armed Forces (SAF) would be created for Bastar. According to the police officials, six dalams (groups) of Naxalites - each dalam usually has between 5 and 15 members - are believed to be operating in Bastar with their bases in Andhra's Khammam and Warangal districts. Their influence extends over a 300-km long strip of land whose depth from the border varies between 25 km and 35 km. The Naxalites reportedly belong to Kondapalli Seetharamaiah's People's War Group of CPI(ML).

RELIEF TO POOR

The activists appear to be making headway among the tribals inhabiting the area by concentrating on righting the continual exploitation of tribals by the administrative machinery. They paid a visit to a deputy ranger in village Kestaram who used to accept ghee from villagers - now he doesn't. In another village, a forest official who had grabbed 50 goats was made to return them. Near village Tailaguda, a few laborers were working under the watchful eye of a forester when 4 men walked up and warned the forester that if the legitimate wages were not paid, his arm or leg would be chopped off.

Earlier this year, in village Kestaram, 6 men assaulted a ranger and a deputy ranger for abusing and threatening Adivasis. In Toynar, some Naxalites advised a shopkeeper not to keep faulty weights. In another place, the village school teacher is suddenly regular with his classes. There has been more than one instance of Naxalites demanding ransom either from forest contractors or from forest officials who have made a fast buck. In no case has the matter been reported to the police. Says a Jagdalpur resident, "They are doing the work of vigilance department. Are you surprised that the locals trust them more than the police?"

For the present, the Naxalites are feeling their way in Bastar. One major offense that can be laid at their door is carrying country-made weapons without a license. They are at the first stage of their plan of action: winning confidence of the people. Seetharamaiah's group be-



lieves in limited violence - called "necessary action" - particularly against informers. Once credibility has been established, the Naxalites will urge the tribals on to forcible cultivation of forest land, after which the landless occupy farms belonging to the big landowners.

The police, for their part, are watching and waiting. Says Vishwa Ranjan, Bastar's superintendent of police: "At this time, more than anything, we are interested in identifying the groups and their members, and in plotting their movements." However, there is no denying that the police are at a loss because the harassment is seldom reported as the victim usually has something to hide. The authorities are nervously waiting for the moment when the Naxalites start carrying out their threats; in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, which borders Bastar, Naxalites chopped off a police informer's arm early Oct. Vishwa Ranjan says that with 39 more vehicles and the promised 100% wireless coverage, the pressure will ease considerably. The SAF battalion will take 2 years to become operational.

Meanwhile, even as the law prepares for a confrontation, no attempt has been made to right the tribals' wrongs. For example, a forest official in Jagdalpur brushes aside press reports of extortion by his department's men, saying, "I think it is greatly exaggerated." But he admits that no serious investigation has been made into the allegations. With such an uncaring attitude, it is more than likely that the oppressed tribals will turn to the Naxalites and their rough and ready justice.

(From India Today)

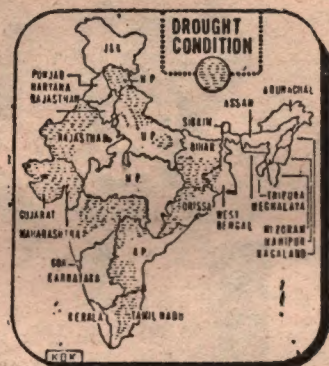
Many States Face Severe Drought Situation

Many parts of India in at least 10 out of 21 states are reportedly facing a severe drought because of a lack of rains. Official sources have said that as many as 100 million people may be affected. According to the Economic Times, the drought this year appears to be at least as severe as that of 1979, when 11 states were affected and food production fell to 110 million tons. So far 90 districts in 7 states have been officially declared drought-stricken with a consequent shortfall of 6 to 8 million tons in the target of 34 million tons for the kharif crop.

The havoc caused by the floods in UP and Orissa and the cyclones that ravaged Andhra, Orissa and Gujarat have further compounded the loss in food output along with property damage and the loss of human and animal life. The drought in West Bengal and Bihar has been described as the worst since independence.

In Bihar, Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra has estimated that 420,000 tons of kharif crop would be lost out of the targeted 630,000 tons of production. Earlier, opposition parties called for an immediate discussion in Parliament of press reports that over 100 people died of starvation in Bihar. Deputy Speaker G. Lakshmanan refused to allow discussion until facts about the deaths were officially ascertained from the Bihar government. This led Subramaniam Swamy of Janata Party to ask, "Are you waiting for more people to die?" Swamy read out a report in the Telegraph of Calcutta which gave names of people who had died of starvation.

In another development, PTI reported 5 people were killed and 3 injured in police firing on a mob that surrounded the



Areas in India with drought conditions.

police station in Palajori in Bihar on Oct. 7. The news agency quoted the deputy commissioner of Santhal Parganas, U.D. Choubey, as saying that the crowd had manhandled the local block development officer when he insisted on carrying out relief work through government machinery instead of the panchayat as demanded by the villagers. According to Choubey, the crowd tried to kill the official but he fled to shelter in the police station.

According to newspaper accounts, over 40 taluks in 10 districts in Maharashtra are facing a serious drought. The kharif crop in 2,200 villages is almost lost and the prospects of the rabi crop are dim. More seriously, drought has also developed in irrigated areas where Maharashtra's sugar industry is concentrated. Some of the affected districts are Ahmednagar, Nasik, Pune, Satara, Sholapur and Aurangabad.

Scanty rainfall in Gujarat this year had an adverse impact on 9000 villages in 16 districts. The agriculture output this

year was expected to be 3 million tons in comparison with last year's production of 4.8 million tons. The cotton production was expected to be only 25 to 30% of last year's output and the groundnut production was expected to be cut to just more than half of last year.

Parts of Rajasthan are in the fourth year of drought made worse by the government's failure to provide relief. All 725 villages in Jodhpur district were drought-stricken with crop damage ranging from 75 to 90%.

The Economic and Political Weekly commented that the absence of rains has burnt crops, but seeds are not going to be available for next year. Further not only have the water supplies dried out, but the water table would be drained and hydel power generation, which is already affected, would get progressively accentuated. Agriculture employment has shrunk; food and fodder prices have risen.

Village Denied Development Work

Rajasthan Govt Retaliates for Demands

Harmara village in Rajasthan is seeing no PWD work this year. The landless laborers agitated last year for minimum wages and against corruption in public works.

The project last year was the Madan-gunj-Harmara road in Ajmer district. Most of the workers never got the minimum wage of Rs 7 a day. Part of the wage was being paid to people who never worked on the project. The workers, especially the women, decided not to be cowed down. They refused to sign or thumbmark the muster rolls unless they

US-AID Official Accused of Smuggling

A senior officer of the United States Agency for International Development (AID), Leon Wright, and his wife Erlinda were detained and questioned by Indian customs officials at the Delhi airport for failing to declare dutiable items. The goods were valued at \$250,000. The Wrights were returning from a trip to Hongkong and reportedly had 6 suitcases containing wristwatches, TV parts, vitamin B complex used in making medicines, and other items.

The couple was stopped as they walked through the lane meant for passengers who have nothing to declare. A preliminary examination of their passports indicated that the couple had made over 12 trips to Hong Kong in the last 4 months. According to an AID spokesperson, Wright held a diplomatic passport. The couple has not been turned over to the Indian police for further questioning.

Gupta investigated as a result of which the Block Development Officer was suspended and transferred, the panchayat dissolved and a new panchayat election held.

This year, there are no projects.

(information from Prabhask Joshi in the Indian Express)

'Time to Rise' and 'Prisoners of Conscience' Win Tyne Awards

(continued from p.1)

"of noncommercial" nature and "of interest and value to the majority of the people in Tyneside and the country at large."

The other Indian film "of great merit" was An Indian Story made by Tapan Bose and Suhasini Mulay. This documentary is a factual account of the blinding of several dozens of people in Bihar with direct involvement of police officials, government doctors and local landlords.

In accepting the award, Patwardhan said: "I consider my films to be successful only in as much as they reflect the power, the beauty and the courage of the people about whom they were made. The award is an affirmation of not just my own films but of the film practice of others who are motivated by the struggles against injustice throughout the world."

When asked how he is going to spend the money, Patwardhan replied: "My share is 75%. It will go into making the new film Twin City." Twin City is already in progress and deals with the half of

Bombay that lives in makeshift huts on pavements.

"Uthhan Da Vela" focuses on the problems of farm workers of Indian origin in British Columbia and their unionization efforts. Jim Monroe was its co-director. The movie was made with the help of the Canadian Farmworkers Union and the Indian People's Association in North America. The 38-minute documentary was eventually bought by the National Film Board of Canada. It has not been cleared by the Indian censor board on the ground that the screening of the movie in India may adversely affect relations between India and Canada. The movie had earlier won the Silver Dove award at the Leipzig Film Festival last year.

Prisoners of Conscience was made immediately after the Emergency and focuses on political prisoners before, during and after the Emergency.

[A Time to Rise can be obtained by writing to the Canadian Farmworkers Union, 4730 Imperial St., Burnaby, British



Two thousand slum dwellers, sitting on both sides of the projectionist, watch Anand Patwardhan's documentaries at Chita Camp outside Bombay. These people used to live in what was known as Janata Colony near the Atomic Energy Commission. Their colony was demolished during the Emergency. This showing is like many that Patwardhan is organizing around the country.

Columbia, V5J 1C2. Prisoners of Conscience is available from IPANA. Also, anyone willing to assist financially this young filmmaker in completing Twin City can send assistance through IPANA. Checks should be made to IPANA and marked for Twin City.]

737 Films Certified in 1981

During 1981, the number of Indian feature films certified by the Board of Film Censors was 737, according to a statement by N.K.P. Salve, minister of state for information and broadcasting.

The minister told Parliament that Hindi films certified numbered 153, Malayalam 111, Telugu 132 and Tamil 137.

The total for preceding years was 619 in 1978, 714 in 1979, and 742 in 1980.

Ali Akbar Khan Disappoints at Columbia

AMAR SANYAL

As part of its exhibition, "The Living Arts of India," New York's Museum of Modern Art had a music program where Ali Akbar was introduced by the thinker violinist Yehudi Menuhin. That was 1955, twenty-seven years ago!

Ali Akbar was then 33 and that was the first time an outstanding exponent of India's classical music was presented before a selected American musical audience. The depth, sensibility and rare virtuoso skill that Ali Akbar expressed through his performances drove the music critics to write rave reviews in the Times, the Herald Tribune (now extinct) and the New Yorker. That event in fact opened the floodgates of Indian music which has since been spilling over into this country and Europe. Howard Taubman of the Times then wrote in a speculative mood "about the power of his music to reach out." Reach out it did as we know it today.

Now at 60, twenty-seven years and hundreds of spellbinding recitals later (all over the world, literally), Ali Akbar may very well be whispering to himself - "Do what Jascha Heifetz has done years ago. Retire, relax and reminisce!" But the admirers and commercial entrepreneurs have a different perception of reality. And so, as a result of a combination of circumstances, New York music lovers had another chance to hear the Titan in his fading years with whatever residual magnetism he now has. The last hurrah ... old soldiers never die ... they just fade away. This fading away ceremony was at Columbia University's McMillin theater auditorium on November 13, 1982. The program was presented by Oriental Records and the Alternative Museum in association with the India Club of Columbia University.

Ali Akbar started with Kaushiki Kanara (variously pronounced as Kaunsi kanhra, Kaushik kanara, etc.) - an architectonic blend of Malkosh and Darbari Kanara. These two ragas mix and blend and dovetail like yang and yin and start their own chemistry of development and identity in nobody else's hand as it does in the interpretation of Ali Akbar. With his unmistakable style of meditative progression Ali Akbar moved his pawns by his opening notes ReNiDha in multiple combination: drida with krintan and meend. His jawa (coconut triangular plectrum flashing like lightning) was aiming for the kharaj strings for the deeper interplay of the phrases. Then he started coloring his canvas and began to show the inner structure of the raga with note clusters uniquely his own but somehow the texture and the clarity of the individual tones were not tuned to infinity which is Ali Akbar's trade mark. His palette seemed increasingly drier and the canvas

of his Bistar appeared spotted with soulless black holes conveying no inner message. The contemplative strain of slow runs with gamak and meend did not have adequate body to support his plan of silsila (connected progression as a function of time and sentiment). Something snapped irrecoverably and fragmentation resulted. The notes did not develop and blossom into a proportionate phrase and apart from the string changing and fingering slips the spell of Ali Akbar's magic gradually diluted into merely sound without shape. Was it due to too much of electronic gadgetry? Too many microphones, frequency equalizers, speakers or civil war between low frequency and midrange and low frequency requirements? Whatever the cause, the resulting sound was a defecated sarod. Where was the dark, velvety Ali Akbar sound? His Dha and Ma in that old sarod of his? The sarod made by his uncle - Ayat Ali - that he has been playing for 50 years?

Ali Akbar carried on with the onslaughts on other areas of the raga - his ascent Dha Ni Sa Ga Ma and tracking back to Re via Darbari kanara's Ga and then plunging deep into Ni Dha Ni Pa and reaching Ma in the kharaj string. The whole effort was brave but tentative. Napoleon in Waterloo!

Alap and Jor, the two formidable pillars on which Ali Akbar capitalized throughout his musical ascendancy and exuded dignity and grandeur collapsed like papier mache. Hurriedly he changed his strategy and switched to Vilampat gut to inject more dynamics in the whole endeavor. This brought in Swapan Choudhury - the new treader in tabla who entered the field with a traditional peshkar and resulted in a hair-raising tehai. The subsequent interplay and dialog lifted the spirit considerably and the mutual challenge between melodic phrase and cross rhythm of tabla sometimes exploded into uproarious tehai - chakradar tehai actually. Swapan Choudhury showed restraint and virtuosity as the occasion demanded and never hindered the filigree passages Ali Akbar was manufacturing impromptu with astonishing time division - upaj - and effortlessly landing into that great cyclical time point - the home base - the diamond - the return into sum or the dha of tabla. Ali Akbar was visibly enjoying the tabla's desperate runs to meet the time table of his avaras of sometimes four sometimes six repeats of his fixed composition by which time the tabla also has to arrive after an extended chakradar tehai. Ali Akbar brought to his San Francisco College a few outstanding young tabla players like Chaturial, Mahapurush Mishra, Shankar Ghosh and now Swapan Choudhury has joined his faculty.

From his Vilampet to drut via madhya laya - the usual layout of the recital plan.

Next was intermission and then Ali Akbar started with a dhun type of fixed composition in what he exclusively brands a combination of Mand-Loom Bhoop. These are really folk moods and lets Ali Akbar feel nostalgic about his stay in Rajasthan which has Mand as a folk identity. He used a rather rare rhythm cycle of eight and a half beats divided as 2, 3, 2, and 1.5 sections. There were usual pyrotechnics of sarod and tabla battling for infinite variations, of course sarod leads the way and tabla echoes the bol patterns of lari and larguthaas initiated by Ali Akbar. The audience languishes for this game of give and take between sarod and tabla and this item is invariably a crowd pleaser. The tabla chases the melodic embroidery with its own bols and buts - and the two orgiastically synchronize at the common meeting point - the sum - or dha. The audience goes into euphoric uproar - this is the built-in tamasha which does not in any way enhance the musical esthetics and should if at all possible be left out in a serious recital. But this does happen in all

musical repertoires and may be endured since it cannot be so readily cured. At the end this tamasha has to happen a few times and then the audience goes home happy and satisfied and fulfilled.

In this dhun Ali Akbar displayed his characteristic command over transition from one raga to another at a finger touch. He showed shades of nearly fifteen ragas that emerged rather transiently. He touches a raga and melts onto the other, may be of quite a different color - much as Krishna would play with Gopis in a separate space time continuum.

Ali Akbar, the maestro at McMillin theater, triggered the image of music's Mohenjodaro.



The Montreal unit of IPANA organized a Third World Cultural Evening in Montreal, October 16 (see story in November issue of India Now). There were folk dances from India, Uganda and Palestine, songs from Latin America and music by the reggae group Street People. Photograph shows the Indian folk dance to the song "Hey Shamalo".

INDIA NOW

c/o IPANA
P.O. Box 665
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

c/o IPANA
P.O. Box 37
Westmount
Que. H3Z 2T1

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
STATE COLLEGE, PA
PERMIT NO. 18